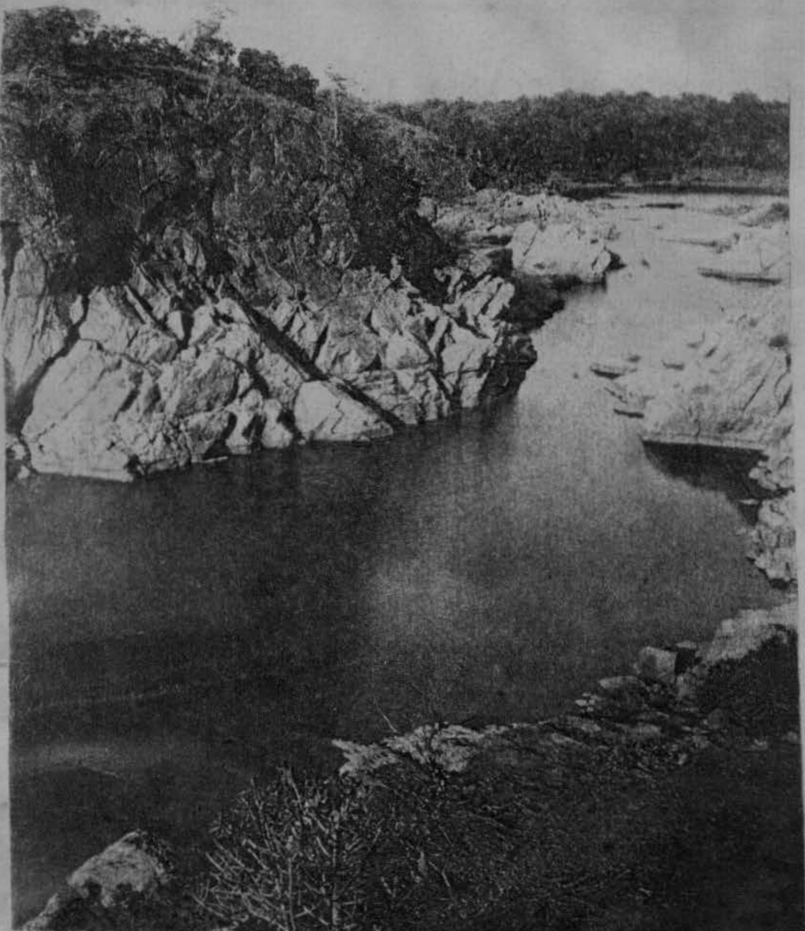
19

SEONI



THE WAINGANGA.

CENTRAL PROVINCES DISTRICT GAZETTEERS

SEONI DISTRICT

VOLUME A

DESCRIPTIVE

EDITED BY R. V. RUSSELL, I.C.S

ALLAHABAD
PRINTED AT THE PIONEER PRESS

1907

PREFATORY NOTE.

The extant Settlement Reports on the Seonī District are those of Captain (Colonel) W. B. Thomson (1867) and of Khān Bahādur Aulād Husain (1899). Several extracts from Mr. R. A. Sterndale's interesting and well-known book 'Seonī or Camp Life on the Sātpurā Range' (Calcutta, Thacker, Spink and Co., 1877), have been included in the Gazetteer. The writer is indebted to Mr. R. B. Chapman, Deputy Commissioner of the District, for interesting notes on village life and on the material condition of the people, which have been reproduced in this volume; to Captain Oxley, I.M.S., for notes on the game birds of the District and on the health of the people; and to Mr. C. J. Irwin, Assistant Commissioner, for some careful reports. The section on Geology has been kindly contributed by Mr. L. Leigh Fermor of the Geological Survey. The photographs inserted in this volume are from originals supplied by Captain Oxley, I.M.S. Some information on Botany and Forests has been furnished by Mr. Shām Rao and Mr. Peake of the Forest Department. As usual the chapter on History and the section on language are compiled from notes furnished by Mr. Hīra Lāl, Assistant Gazetteer Superintendent.

NAGPUR: R. V. R.
21st February 1907.

SEONI DISTRICT GAZETTEER.

CONTENTS.

Chapter V.—LOANS, PRICES, WAGES, MANUFACTURES, TRADE AND COMMUNICATIONS.

Chapter VI.—FORESTS AND MINERALS.

PARAGRAPH INDEX.

CHAPTER I.—GENERAL DESCRIPTION.

CHAPTER II.—HISTORY AND ARCHÆOLOGY.

CHAPTER IV.—AGRICULTURE.

CHAPTER VI.—FORESTS AND MINERALS.

CHAPTER VII.—FAMINE.

CHAPTER VIII.—LAND REVENUE ADMINISTRATION.

CHAPTER IX.—GENERAL ADMINISTRATION.

Appendix.—GAZETTEER OF TAHSILS, TOWNS, IMPORTANT VILLAGES, RIVERS AND HILLS.

Name of place—

List of Deputy Commissioners who held charge of the Seonī District from 1823 to date.

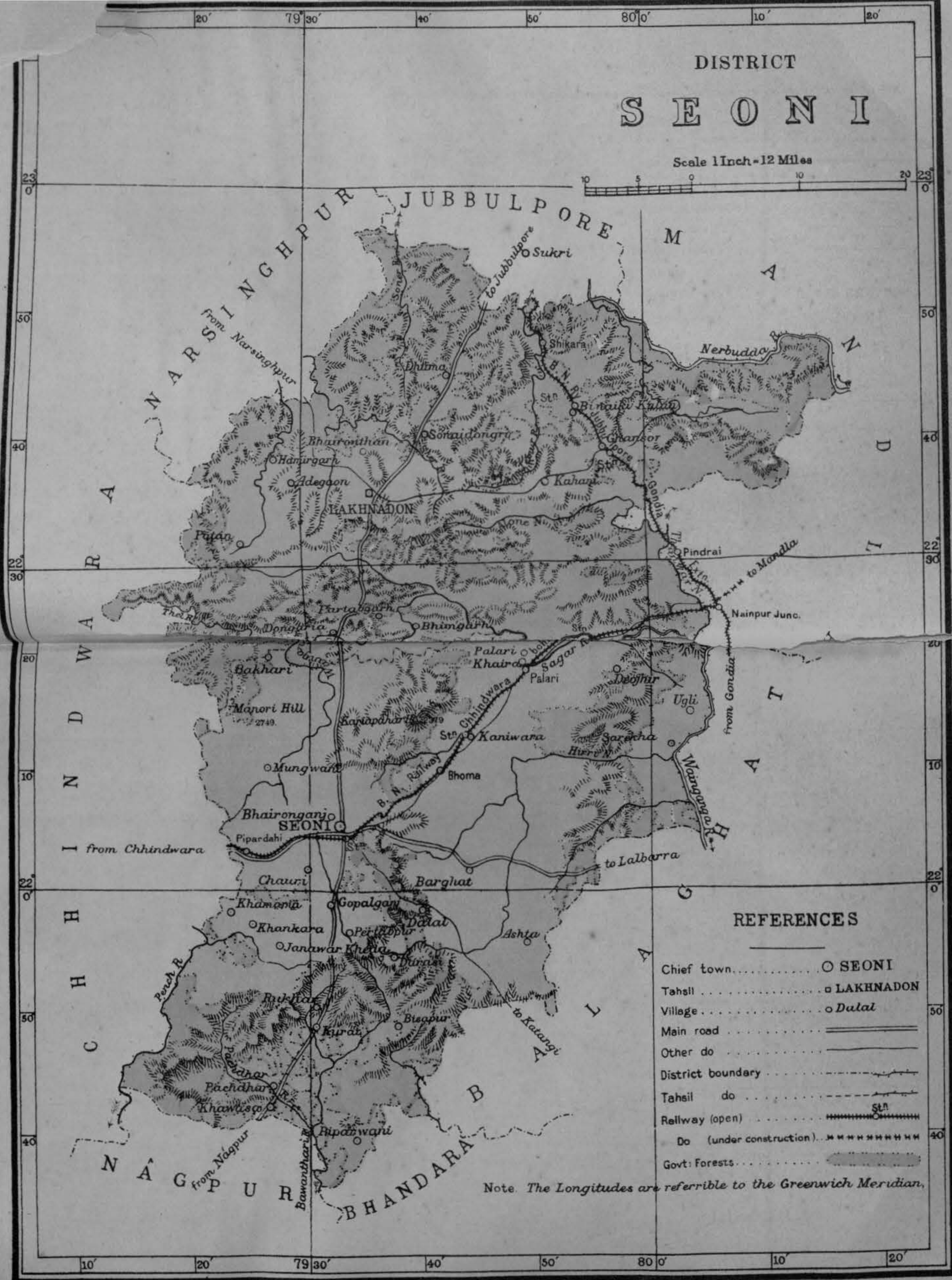
Serial No.	Name with military rank, if any.	From	To	Remarks.
	PRINCIPAL ASSISTANT TO AGENT TO GOVERNOR-GENERAL IN INDIA.			
1	Captain T. Wardlow ...	6-9-1823	6-12-1825	Date from which available records begin.
2	J. Stephens, Esq. ...	7-12-1825	17-8-1827	Was killed in the court by one Mir Wali.
3	Captain T. Wardlow ...	2-9-1827	20-10-1833	
4	,, A. Sconce ...	21-10-1833	10-12-1833	
5	C. W. Fagan, Esq. ...	11-12-1833	18-6-1835	
6	D. F. McLeod, Esq. ...	19-6-1835	30-6-1837	
7	Captain C. R. Browne ..	1-7-1837	30-10-1839	
8	,, A. Wheatley ...	1-11-1839	6-4-1843	
	DEPUTY COMMISSIONERS.			
9	Captain C. R. Browne ...	7-4-1843	27-10-1843	
10	Lieutenant W. H. Surkins ...	28-10-1843	12-11-1843	
11	Captain C. A. Dallas ...	13-11-1843	21-2-1844	
12	,, G. W. Hamilton ...	22-2-1844	2-12-1844	
13	,, H. Wakeman ...	3-12-1844	18-3-1845	
14	St. George Tucker, Esq. ...	19-3-1845	18-9-1845	
15	Lieutenant A. Skene ...	19-9-1845	11-4-1848	
16	Captain H. Wakeman ...	12-4-1848	2-4-1849	
17	,, A. Skene ...	3-4-1849	18-3-1850	
18	Lieutenant Montgomery ...	19-3-1850	15-12-1850	
19	Captain A. Skene ...	16-12-1850	30-6-1851	
20	F. W. Pinkney, Esq. ...	1-7-1851	13-9-1851	

There is no record available from 13-9-1851 to 1-8-1854, but from the signatures in the Permanent Establishment Returns of 1853 and 1854 it seems that J. C. Wood, Esq., held charge of the District.

21	Lieutenant Benjamin Hawes, 2nd European Bengal Regiment	1-8-1854	30-10-1856	
22	Lieutenant F. A. Tenton, 7th Light Cavalry	1-11-1856	30-11-1856	
23	Lieutenant W. Hamilton, 2nd European Bengal Regiment	1-12-1856	5-2-1857	
25	Lieutenant E. Clerk, Madras Light Cavalry	6-2-1857	30-6-1857	
26	Lieutenant W. B. Thomson, 4th Light Cavalry ...	1-7-1857	31-7-1864	
27	H. I. McGeorge, Esq. ...	1-8-1864	13-9-1864	
28	Colonel J. B. Dennys ...	14-9-1864	22-3-1869	

List of Deputy Commissioners who held charge of the Seonī District from 1823 *to date*—(concld.)

Serial No.	Name with military rank, if any.	From	To	Remarks.
29	Captain Saurin Brooke ...	23-3-1869	30-3-1872	
30	Major W. B. Thomson ...	31-3-1872	26-12-1872	
31	Lieutenant-Colonel C. James	27-12-1872	11-3-1873	
32	A. H. L. Fraser, Esq., I.C.S.	12-3-1873	17-3-1873	
33	Captain H. C. E. Ward ...	18-3-1873	23-10-1873	
34	J. W. Tawney, Esq. ...	24-10-1873	19-5-1874	
35	Captain J. A. Temple ...	20-5-1874	12-1-1875	
36	Major H. I. Lugard ...	13-1-1875	1-10-1878	
37	Major J. A. Temple ...	2-10-1878	9-12-1884	
38	Colonel C. H. Grace ...	10-12-1884	27-3-1885	
39	S. H. Hennesy, Esq. ...	28-3-1885	30-3-1885	
40	H. H. Priest, Esq., I.C.S. ...	31-3-1885	5-5-1885	
41	L. S. Carey, Esq., I.C.S. ...	6-5-1885	15-6-1885	
42	L. Gordon, Esq.	16-6-1885	8-11-1887	
43	T. Drysdale, Esq. ...	9-11-1887	8-3-1894	
44	J. Walker, Esq., I.C.S. ...	9-3-1894	28-11-1894	
45	T. Drysdale, Esq.. ..	29-11-1894	25-2-1895	
46	A. Mayne, Esq., I.C.S. ...	26-2-1895	31-3-1895	
47	J. Walker, Esq., I.C.S. ...	1-4-1895	31-3-1896	
48	H. Jowers, Esq., I.C.S. ...	1-4-1896	19-9-1896	
49	F. L. J. Williamson, Esq. I.C.S.	20-9-1896	26-11-1896	
50	M. W. Foxstrangways, Esq., I.C.S.	27-11-1896	4-1-1897	
51	F. L. J. Williamson, Esq., I.C.S.	5-1-1897	21-2-1897	
52	B. Robertson, Esq., I.C.S. ...	22-2-1897	13-3-1897	
53	F. L. J. Williamson, Esq., I. C. S.	14-3-1897	4-4-1897	
54	Captain D. J. C. MacNabb ...	5-4-1897	4-8-1898	
55	C. E. Low, Esq., I.C.S. ...	5-8-1898	13-10-1898	
56	Captain D. J. C. MacNabb ...	14-10-1898	22-5-1899	
57	F. C. Turner, Esq., I.C.S. ...	23-5-1899	31-10-1899	
58	A. Mayne, Esq., I.C.S. ...	1-11-1899	12-3-1901	
59	F. Dewar, Esq., I.C.S. ..	13-3-1901	29-7-1901	
60	J. T. Chamberlain, Esq., I.C.S.	30-7-1901	25-11-1901	
61	A. Mayne, Esq., I C.S. ...	26-11-1901	5-5-1902	
62	A. C. F. B. Blennerhassett, Esq., I.C.S.	6-5-1902	28-12-1902	
63	F. S. A. Slocock, Esq., I.C.S.	29-12-1902	14-1-1904	
64	A. C. F. B. Blennerhassett, Esq., I C.S.	15-1-1904	6-9-1904	
65	J. A. Bathurst, Esq., I.C.S. ...	7-9-1904	14-11-1904	
66	R. A. B. Chapman, Esq., I.C.S.	15-11-1904	2-8-1906	
67	P. S. Patak, Esq., I.C.S. ...	3-8-1906	1-11-1906	
70	R. A. B. Chapman, Esq., I.C.S.	2-11-06	...	



Prepared specially for the Supdt., Gazetteer Revision, C. P.

Helio S. I. O., Calcutta.

SEONI DISTRICT.

CHAPTER I.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION.

BOUNDARIES AND PHYSICAL FEATURES.

Position and boundaries.

1. The Seonī District (21° 36′ to 22° 57′ N. and 79° 19′ to 80° 17′ E.) consists of a long narrow section of the Sātpurā plateau overlooking the Nerbudda valley on the north and the Nāgpur plain on the south. It is the third of the four plateau Districts going from west to east, adjoining Chhindwāra to the west and Mandlā to the east. The shape of the District is an irregular oblong narrowing at the southern extremity; its length from north to south is about 86 miles and the width over most of the District about 43 miles. The total area is 3206 square miles. Of the two tahsīls Lakhnādon occupies the northern portion of the District and Seonī, which is slightly the larger, the southern.

Physical features.

2. All round the north and north-west of the District the border hills of the Sātpurās, thickly fringed with forest and overlooking the Nerbudda, separate Seoni from Jubbulpore and Narsinghpur, except along a strip to the north-east where the Nerbudda itself is the boundary towards Mandlā, and 44 villages lying below the ghāts are included in the District. In the extreme north-west also a few villages below the hills belong to Seonī. South of the northern passes lies the Lakhnādon plateau, a rolling country of alternate ridges and hollows terminating in another belt of hill and forest which leads down to the Waingangā. Except to the east where the open country continues up to the Mandlā border, and

along part of the western boundary with Chhindwāra, the Lakhnādon plateau is surrounded by jungle. The open part of the plateau contains a considerable quantity of black soil on which spring crops are grown, alternating with inferior stony land on the ridges. The Sher river flows through the centre of the plateau from east to west being crossed by a fine bridge at Sonai Dongrī, and passes into Narsinghpur to join the Nerbudda. The Temur and Soner are other tributaries of the Nerbudda rising from the south. To the south-west of the District and separated from the Lakhnādon plateau by the Thel and Waingangā rivers, lies the Seonī Havelī, a level tract of the most fertile black soil in the District and extending from the line of hills east of Seonī town to the Chhindwāra border. In this plateau the Waingangā rises at Partābpur a few miles south of Seonī and flows for some distance to the north until it is joined by the Thel from Chhindwāra, and then across the District to the east crossing the Nāgpur-Jubbulpore road at Chhapāra. On the south-west the Pench separates Seonī from Chhindwāra. The general heights of the Seonī and Lakhnādon plateaus are about 2000 feet above sea-level. East of Seonī a line of hills runs from south to north and beyond this lies another open tract, some 200 feet lower than the Seonī Havelī, constituting the valleys of the Sāgar and Hirrī rivers. The northern portion of this about Ghansor consists of the usual black soil on which spring crops are produced, but to the south in the area round Barghāt the character of the country changes; the rock formation is crystalline and metamorphic and the soil is yellow and sandy; rice and the minor autumn millets form the staple crops. Another line of hills separates the Ghansor plain from the valley of the Waingangā, which, after crossing the District from west to east, turns south at the point where it is joined by the Thānwar river from Mandlā and forms the boundary of Seonī for some miles until it diverges into Bālāghāt. The valley of the Waingangā,

at first stony, broken and confined by hills, as it winds round the northern spurs of the Seonī plateau, becomes afterwards an alternation of rich alluvial basins and narrow gorges, until just before reaching the eastern border of the District, it commences its descent to the lower country, passing over a series of rapids and deep stony channels, and overhung by walls of granite 200 feet high. The falls of the Waingangā and its course for the last six miles before its junction with the Thānwar on the border of the District may perhaps rank next to the Bherāghāt gorge of the Nerbudda for beauty of river scenery. The lower valley of the Waingangā is about 400 feet below the Ghansor plain, from which it is separated by another line of forest-clad hills; and a narrow rice-growing strip along its western bank, called the Uglī tract, is included in the Seonī District. In the extreme south of the Seonī tahsīl there is another small area of submontane land, forming the Dongartāl or Kurai tract, largely covered with forest and the residence of numbers of Gaolīs who are professional cattle-breeders. The old road from Nāgpur to Seonī passes through Dongartāl, and the new one through Kurai. The descent of the ghāts here is 700 feet from the Seonī plateau. The Bāwanthari river rising in the southern hills, and receiving the waters of numerous small streams, carries the drainage of this area into the Nāgpur District on its way to join the Waingangā. The forests are extensive and form a thick belt along the northern and southern hills, with numerous isolated patches in the interior. In the north however the forest vegetation is stunted and scanty, and the open country is bare of trees, and presents a bleak appearance, the villages consisting of squalid looking collections of mud huts perched generally on a bare ridge. In the rice tracts on the other hand the growth of the forests is luxuriant, and fruit trees are scattered over the open country and round the villages. Owing to the abundance of wood the houses are large and well built, and surrounded by

bamboo fences enclosing small garden plots. The single village of Dongaria, belonging to the Adegaon estate in the north-west, is situated outside the District in Chhindwāra, but with this exception there is no interlacing of boundaries.

Elevation.

3. As already stated the general elevation of the plateau is a little more than 2000 feet high. Seonī itself is 2043 feet, and Partābpur, the source of the Wainganga, somewhat higher. The peak of Manorī on the western border has an elevation of 2749 feet, the highest recorded in the District at present, and Kariapahār to the north-west of Seonī of 2379 feet. On the east and south of the Seonī tahsīl the elevation falls considerably. Kanhiwāra and Keolāri on the Mandlā line are about 1300 feet high and Piparia Kalān near Ghansor in the Seonī tahsīl about 1000 feet. Barghāt and Arī in the south-east are each about 1200 feet. The Lakhnādon tahsīl has a general elevation of 1500 to 2000 feet, except perhaps in the tract bordering the Nerbudda river in the north-east.

Scenery.

4. Colonel Thomson, who wrote in the sixties, gave the following description of the scenery of the District, and though the country is now better known and the extent of forest has decreased, most of what he said remains true at present:—'The scenery 'in many parts of the District is very remarkable. Nothing 'can exceed the beauty of certain portions of the Nerbudda 'river, where it flows in long, deep, cool-looking often wind-'ing reaches, between high banks, covered near the water-'edge with short grass, and crowned with magnificent old 'trees of all descriptions which overhang the water, under 'which herds of spotted deer and flocks of peacock may 'sometimes be seen feeding. The scenery of the upper 'Waingangā too is very charming, like the Westmoreland 'rivers, and is really grand at the junction of the Thānwar, 'where they commence their fall into the lower country, and 'at last meet in a beautiful deep reach in the heart of a

'great forest. The Hirrī in like manner passes with a more 'gradual fall, but for a longer distance and through almost 'higher and more solid-looking rocks, which are crowned on 'the one side by the ruins of an old fort called Amodāgarh; 'on the other by those of the palace of the famous Rājput 'queen, Sonā Rānī. Few have seen this place as it is situa-'ted in the heart of a dense forest, and is only accessible on 'foot and then with difficulty. The Baigās have rope ladders 'from the top of the precipice nearly down to its foot, to 'enable them to get at the honey-combs found in clefts of the 'rocks. Many magnificent views may be obtained, as that 'from the Nagīrkhāna hill near Seonī, so called because the 'people say that fairy drums are sometimes heard beating 'from it. From the old forts of Kohwāgarh, Partābgarh and 'Bhainsāgarh, the view extends over the beautifully cultiva-'ted Waingangā valley with its numerous tanks and pictures-'quely situated villages. Glimpses of the river are seen and 'the hills of the Maikal range loom dark in the far distance 'beyond There is much of interest about these hills and 'the old ruined forts, in connection with each almost of 'which there is some legend of the doings of Alhā, Udal and 'Sonā Rānī, and in almost all of which the people declare 'that money is buried.'[1]

GEOLOGY.[2] (BY L. LEIGH FERMOR.)

5. Except in the most general way, very little is known about the geology of the Seonī District. Lāla Kishen Singh, late of the Geological Survey, traced out the boundary between the Deccan trap and the metamorphic and crystalline complex, the two chief formations of the District. P. N. Bose made a traverse from Jubbulpore to Seonī, and thence to Katangī in the Bālāghāt District, whilst the present writer has examined some of the sections exposed in the cuttings on the Sātpurā railway where it crosses this District. A

[1] Settlement Report (1867), pp. 13, 14.

[2] This section has been kindly supplied by Mr. L. L. Fermor, Assistant Superintendent of the Geological Survey.

short account of the geology of this District has also been given in the Gazetteer of the Central Provinces, 2nd edition, page 470 (1870). It is on the foregoing sources that the following is based.

The geological formations found in the District are the following:—

(1) Alluvium and soil.

(2) Laterite.

(3) Deccan Trap.

(4) Intertrappeans.

(5) Lametās.

(6) Metamorphic and crystalline complex.

Of these the two most important are Nos. 3 and 6, covering, as they do, practically the whole of the District (not taking into account the superficial deposits, grouped under 1).

The physical aspect of the District is described in the C. P. Gazetteer for 1870, page 470, as follows:—

'The District is hilly throughout, but the physical fea-'tures characteristic of the two formations form a marked 'contrast. In the southern portions the hills are more 'pointed; the valleys more confined; the soil in the valleys 'is rich, but contains a large admixture of sand; and 'over both hill and valley forest trees of large size abound. 'The beds of the streams are composed of loose sand; and 'there is but little water visible in the dry season. The trap 'hills on the other hand, either take the form of ridges with 'straight outlines and flattened tops, or, rising more gradual-'ly, expand into wide undulating plateaus. The valleys are 'wide and bare, and contain the black soil spread over a 'deep deposit of calcareous clay; and the streams that inter-'sect them, cutting through this deposit, expose broad masses 'of bare black basalt, alternating with marshy stagnant pools 'of water. The hills are commonly clothed with small 'stunted trees; but in the valleys and plateaus, notwithstand-'ing their rich soil, forest trees are very thinly scattered, 'and are seldom of large size.'

(1) *Alluvium and soil*.—As in other parts of the Central Provinces the geology of the country is often disguised by recent superficial deposits, such as alluvium deposited by the streams, and soils derived from the breaking up, under the influence of meteoric agencies, of the underlying rocks. These superficial deposits are, however, not of particular nterest to the geologist, but lie rather within the field of study of the agriculturist.

(2) *Laterite*.—Laterite has been noticed in the country to the south-east of Seonī town, where it forms cappings to the Deccan trap formation at Maili, Amāgarh and Dalāl and also overlaps on to the gneissose rocks near Dalāl. It has also been found at Khāpa on the edge of the Deccan trap formation due south of Seonī. The laterite round Dalāl is said to be very massive.

(3) *The Deccan Trap*.—The Deccan trap formation covers perhaps three-fourths of the whole District, namely, all the northern portions. This portion of the District forms a part of the Sātpurā range, taking roughly the form of an elevated plateau. The remaining quarter of the District, forming the southern and south-eastern portions, consists of the gneissose and schistose rocks grouped as the metamorphic and crystalline complex. The average elevation of this gneissose area is considerably less than that of the trap area. The boundary between the two formations is a very sinuous one, all the little streams draining from the edge of the trap formation over the gneissose area cutting back into the trap, so as to give rise to many valleys of gneissose rocks running up between headlands of trap with cliff-like scarps. As the scarps of the Deccan trap formation are often densely wooded, the scenery along the boundary of these two formations is frequently very picturesque. This trap scarp is the determining factor in the drainage of the District, acting as a watershed. On the northern side of this boundary the streams all flow so as to join the upper portions of the Wain-

gangā, forming in fact, its head waters. Whilst on the southern side of the watershed the streams flow in a general southward direction to contribute, on the east to the lower portions of the Waingangā, and on the west to the head waters of the Bāwanthari and to the Pench. In only two places is this watershed cut through by streams of any importance draining from the north side to the south. This is at the eastern and western borders of the District respectively, in one case the Waingangā and in the other (just outside the District) the Pench, cutting through the Deccan trap scarp and carrying the drainage of the northern side to the south. The difference between the character of the streams on the two sides of this boundary has been well described by Mr. Sterndale, who writes [1] :—

'In the north-western section the rivers are characterised by rugged and often precipitous banks of rocks, with 'clear water dashing over boulder and shingle, or gliding 'along in deep reaches terminated by rocky barriers. The 'south-eastern streams, on the other hand, partake of the 'common Indian character of deep sandy beds, into which 'the water sinks out of sight during the summer, percolating 'through the soft sand till some outcrop of rock here and 'there arrests its course and forces it to the surface, forming 'an occasional pool. When the traveller or peasant would 'slake his thirst, he digs a hole a couple of feet in depth in 'the apparently dry bed of the stream, and has not long to 'wait for the fruits of his labour.'

The formation consists of the usual horizontal layers of basaltic and doleritic lavas, giving rise to the flat-topped hills characteristic of this formation. In many places the flows contain abundance of cavities, originally steam holes, lined or filled with various minerals. The sections exposed in the cuttings on the Sātpurā branch of the Bengal-Nāgpur Railway afford excellent examples of these minerals, the best portion of the line being that starting at Binaiki and descend-

[1] Seonī or Camp Life on the Sātpurā Range, page 299.

ing in a tortuous course down the Shikārāghāt. The minerals that have been observed in these sections are as follows :—quartz, amethyst, calcite, stilbite, scolecite, agate, chalcedony, jasper and green earth. Near Ghansor station the railroad was, in 1904, metalled with a wonderful assortment of jaspers, showing green, brown, purple, white, red and grey colours arranged as patches, cloudings, streaks and spots. They were said to have been quarried close at hand.

(4). *Intertrappean beds.*—Interbedded with the layers of trap there are sometimes to be found thin beds, 2 to 5 feet thick, of sedimentary rocks which, to distinguish them from the lavas forming the larger proportion of the Deccan trap formation, are usually known as intertrappean beds. These beds may be either limestone, sandstone, clay or shale, which in places have been converted into porcellanite and chert. Such cherty intertrappean beds have been noted on the road from Seonī to Selua some 5 miles east of Seonī.

(5). *The Lametās.*—The Lametā rocks are a sedimentary formation situated between the base of the trap and the gneissose rocks. As they are very thin they crop out only along the base of the trap scarps. They are not, however, always present, so that the trap sometimes rests directly on the gneissose rocks. The usual thickness of the Lametās is about 2 to 3 feet; but in places where they are best developed they are sometimes as much as 15 to 20 feet thick. Whilst in one place, namely at Kuchari, towards the eastern end of the trap-gneiss boundary, they are as much as 25 to 30 feet thick. The other chief localities for these rocks are where the Waingangā cuts its way through the trap scarp, and at Khamaria and Sellori, to the south-west of Seonī. In composition the Lametā rocks are calcareous sandstones, conglomerates, grits and arkoses or felspathic grits derived from the denudation of the underlying gneisses and granites. In places they have been rendered cherty.

(6). *Metamorphic and crystalline complex.*—The rocks of this formation lie in the southern and south-eastern portions of the District on the southern side of the trap-gneiss boundary line mentioned on page 7. Their composition has been but little studied. They are known to consist in part of schistose micaceous gneisses, granitoid gneisses or gneissose granites, augen-gneisses and true porphyritic granites, the felspars in the latter being sometimes as much as 5 or 6 inches long. Mica-schists are also known to occur. The probability is that a more careful examination of the crystalline rocks of this District would show them to resemble very closely the rocks of the metamorphic and crystalline complex as described[1] in a paper on the petrology of a portion of the Chhindwāra District.

If such be the case then we can expect that in addition to the rocks enumerated above, various crystalline limestones, calciphyres, pyroxenic gneisses, quartzites, hornblende-schists, pegmatites and even manganese-bearing rocks, probably exist in this complex. In fact any search for minerals of economic value in this District should be directed to the metamorphic and crystalline area in preference to the Deccan trap. The principal ore to be looked for is that of manganese, but ores of copper, lead, iron and other substances so often found in the metamorphic and crystalline rocks of India, may also be found.

BOTANY.

Forest trees.

6. The forests of the District are of the usual mixed type common in the Central Provinces. *Sāl* is not found at all. Teak is well represented and is found in abundance in the Kurai and Gangīnāla ranges, where it is generally well grown. *Bījasāl* (*Pterocarpus Marsupium*) is a very important timber tree and is found all over the District, but is only plentiful in the Seonī tahsīl. *Sāj* (*Terminalia tomentosa*) and *lendia*

[1] L. L. Fermor, Rec. Geological Survey Ind., XXXIII, pp. 175 to 207 (1906).

(*Lagerstrœmia parviflora*) are abundant and are important timber trees. Tasar silk worms are fed on the *sāj* tree. The Gonds worship this tree and swear by it. *Khair* (*Acacia catechu*) is found all over the District. It is a stunted tree and most abundant in the Ganginăla range. The bamboo (*Dendrocalamus strictus*) is principally found along the Nerbudda river. Sandal (*Santalum album*) is found wild in Bichua and Chhapāra and a successful plantation has been raised at Pakhāra in the Kurai range. *Tinsā* (*Ougeinia dalbergioides*) is plentiful in the Kurai and Gangināla ranges and is often found growing on old fallow land. It does not attain a large size but is an important timber tree. It has slender grey branches, large oval leaves with grey margins, and small whitish or rose-coloured flowers in short close racemes. The wood is much valued for furniture and agricultural implements. The *sāj* (*Terminalia tomentosa*) is a large tree with long, thin, nearly glabrous leaves. The *dhaurā* (*Anogiessus latifolia*), the *haldū* (*Adina cordifolia*), a tall handsome tree, and the *dhāman* (*Grewia vestita*) are considered good ordinary building woods. The leaves of the *dhaurā* are extensively used by the local Chamārs for tanning leather. Its gum is employed in the manufacture of paper and is also eaten. The timber of *dhāman* is tough and elastic and is used for the shafts of carts and for *banhgīs*. The *bhirā* or satin-wood (*Chloroxylon Swietenia*) has a hard and heavy yellow wood, generally used for oil mills. The leaves have an agreeable aromatic smell. The *shīsham* or rosewood (*Dalbergia latifolia*), the *rohan* or Indian redwood (*Soymida febrifuga*), the bark of which is much used for tanning and dyeing, the *tendū* (*Diospyros tomentosa*) of which the fruits are eaten, the *sīwan* or Indian music wood, with smooth, white or whitish grey bark, rather large brown and yellow flowers, and a yellow fleshy fruit, yield ornamental timbers. The *rohan* is chiefly found in the Kurai range and yields a very strong timber, which is proof against white-ants. Other less valuable trees are the *semar* or cotton-tree

(*Bombax malabaricum*), tall with smooth white bark and prominent scarlet flowers appearing in March when the tree is leafless; the flower-buds are eaten as a vegetable and the silky fibre obtained from the capsules is used to stuff cushions. The Gonds hold this tree sacred and say that their god Holerā Deo lives in it. The gum is used as a medicine for colic. The *ganyār* (*Cochlospermum gossypium*) is a small tree with thick spreading branches, glossy green leaves, and large handsome yellow flowers appearing when the tree is quite leafless. It also yields a silk cotton, and derives its second botanical name from this property, while *Cochlospermum* denotes the fact that its seeds are twisted like a snail's shell. The flowers of this tree are offered to the god Siva, and lighted pieces of its wood are carried by mail-runners, as they smoulder and do not go out. The *amaltās* (*Cassia Fistula*) is well known for its drooping racemes of bright yellow fragrant flowers resembling the laburnum. Its long pendulous pods shake and rattle in the wind and hence the people say that the tree should not be grown in courtyards or it will create quarrels in the house. The *padār* (*Stereospermum suaveolens*) is a large tree with panicles of very fragrant dark crimson flowers, useful in sylviculture as it reproduces freely from seed. The *pāngra* (*Erythrina suberosa*) is often seen as a hedge plant but attains a fair size in the forests and has bright scarlet flowers. The trees which come into foliage early in April when all other species are leafless, and afford a welcome shade from the fierce heat of the sun, are especially noticeable to the traveller on this account. These are the *kusum* (*Schleichera trijuga*) with soft green leaves looking like silk from a distance; the *kachnār* (*Bauhinia variègata*) with its handsome variegated white and pink flowers preceding the leaves; the *māhārūkh* (*Ailanthus excelsa*) with pinnate leaves, yellowish flowers and soft white wood; the *siris* (*Albizzia Lebbek*), with sweet-scented greenish yellow flowers; and the *kohā* (*Terminalia Arjuna*), a large tree with whitish bark

and narrow leaves which grows along streams. The *jāmun* (*Eugenia Jambolana*) is an evergreen tree with rich green leaves and edible black berries. The juice of the fruit makes a good medicine, and the wood is used for well-curbs as it is not affected by the action of water. And the *karanj* (*Pongamia glabra*) is another almost evergreen tree, useful for avenues as cattle dislike the leaves. The *khirnī* (*Mimusops hexandra*) is also evergreen with fragrant white flowers and a sweet fruit which is much eaten. Of these the *kusum*, *kohā*, and *karanj* are perhaps the only ones commonly seen in the forests.

Forest trees—(continued).

7. Among other trees yielding useful products are the well-known mahuā, *harrā*, *palās* and *achār*, all of which are common in parts of the District. The *bhilawān* or marking-nut tree (*Semecarpus Anacardium*) is easily recognised by its large leaves and by the fruits with a thick black pericarp, between the layers of which are the cells containing the corrosive juice used as marking-ink. The fleshy hypocarp of the fruit is eaten. The people think that any one sleeping under this tree will get swellings on the skin. The fruit of the *aonlā* (*Phyllanthus Emblica*) is pickled. It is a favourite food of deer. The *jamrāsi* (*Elaeodendron Roxburghii*) is a small tree with shining serrate leaves. The root is used as a specific for snakebite and is poisonous, and the poles are extensively employed in house-building as they are considered to be proof against the attacks of white-ants. The *mundī* (*Stephegyne parvifolia*) is a common tree with characteristic bluish grey bark. The *beherā* (*Terminalia belerica*) is not very common, but good straight clean poles are often seen in low scrub jungle in dry rocky situations. The bark is used for tanning and the nut for cough and indigestion. The *garāri* or *garrā* (*Cleistanthus collinus*) is common in the Chandarpur and Suklī forests to the south of Seonī. It has small white flowers and yields strong and durable poles for building purposes. The *khamer* (*Gmelina arborea*) is a

middle-sized tree with a pale grey bark exfoliating in scurfy flakes. It has blackish yellow flowers and a round yellow fruit of the size of a plum, which is eaten by wild animals and also by the Gonds. The wood is used for making grain-measures and drums. The *koilār* (*Bauhinia purpurea*) is a small tree with a whitish-grey bark which is used for tanning. The flowers are rose-coloured and are eaten as a vegetable by the forest tribes. The *hewar* or *reunjhā* (*Acacia leucophlœa*) resembling the *babūl*, but with a dirty greyish-white bark and leaflets somewhat like those of the tamarind, is found both in the forests and open country. Its wood is used for making agricultural implements. The *bhoursāl* (*Hymenodictyon excelsum*) is a large conspicuous tree, especially when leafless but still bearing its panicles of fruit with small winged seeds. The wood is used for plough shares. The *kakai* (*Flacourtia Ramontchi*) is a small thorny tree which is fairly common. The *kasai* (*Bridelia retusa*) is found scattered in all localities. It yields a fairly good timber. The *kullū* (*Sterculia urens*) is characteristic of the dry hills and has a smooth whitish papery bark, which makes it especially conspicuous when the tree is leafless, the trunks looking like dead trees. It yields the gum called *katīla* which is used as a medicine for ponies, and the seeds are eaten roasted by the Gonds and Korkūs. The *kūmhi* (*Careya arborea*) is conspicuous for its large leaves and the flowers white in colour. The bark is used for poisoning fish. The *nirmalī* (*Strychnos potatorum*) is a small tree with a thick bark deeply cleft in a vertical direction and small greenish-yellow flowers. The pulp of the fruit is eaten and preserved. The *hingan* (*Balanites Roxburghii*) is a small tree or shrub characteristic of black cotton soils. It has crooked branches and is easily recognised by its grey bark and ashy green foliage. *Mowai* (*Odina Wodier*) is a common middle-sized tree of small value. *Bhoti* (*Kydia calycina*) is a small tree found in almost all forests. *Dikāmāli* (*Gardenia lucida*) is a small tree with oval, smooth, shining leaves and large white solitary flowers.

A yellow strong-smelling gum exudes from the young shoots, which is used in cutaneous diseases and to keep off flies and worms. Of bamboos there are only two species found, the *bāns* (*Dendrocalamus strictus*) and the *katang* (*Bambusa arundinacea*), the latter being planted in the station of Seonī.

Trees of the open country.

8. Among trees of the open country the mahuā, mango, *babūl*, banyan, pīpal, tamarind, *ber*, *nīm* and *bel* are common as in almost all Districts. The Hindus think that mahuā timber should not be used for building houses as it is likely to be struck by lightning. This belief probably arises from the fact that the tree itself is often struck on account of its height. The *pākar* (*Ficus infectoria*) is a fig with narrower leaves than the pīpal. The *gūlar* (*Ficus glomerata*) is often seen standing alone in the fields and growing with a crooked stem. The red fruits appear in clusters on the trunk or branches and are eaten by the little boys though they are full of insects. The Hindus think that a man should not walk beneath the *gūlar* tree or he will lose all his acquired virtue. The *bhokar* (*Cordia Myxa*) is a tree found in the open country and in avenues with fragrant white flowers. The *gulmohar* (*Poniciana regia*) is cultivated and is a fine ornamental tree covered with corymbs of glowing scarlet flowers when in bloom. It is a native of Madagascar.

Shrubs.

9. Of shrubs may be mentioned the well-known *Zizyphus Jujuba*, the wild plum; the *Gardenias* with their prominent sweet-scented white flowers; and the *harsinghār* or *khanchāru* (*Nyctanthes Arbortristis*) with pretty fragrant white flowers which usually appear at night and fall away a short time after dawn. The flowers of this tree are exquisitely fragrant, partaking of the smell of fresh honey, and on that account the plant is much esteemed. Their orange tubes dye a most beautiful buff or orange colour.[1] The *dhāwai* (*Woodfordia*

[1] Roxburgh Flora Indica, p. 29.

floribunda) is an unimposing plant with brick red flowers. The *raunī* (*Mallotus philippensis*) is the shrub from the red berries of which the *kamelā* dye is obtained. The *dudhī* (*Holarrhena antidysenterica*) is a well-known shrub with a stem exuding milky juice and small white fragrant flowers; the bark is used as a febrifuge and as a medicine for dysentery. The *mainphal* (*Randia tomentosa*) is a common thorny shrub used for fencing in the open country; it has smooth, shining, oval leaves and white fragrant flowers turning to yellow as they fade. The *lokhandī* (*Ixora parviflora*) is a shrub or small tree with oblong, blunt leaves; the wood burns well and the branches are carried as torches by the mail-runners. The *gugal* (*Balsamodendron Mukul*) is a strongly aromatic shrub akin to the Arabian tree from which myrrh is obtained and also to the tree producing the balsam or balm of Scripture. The *akrā* (*Calotropis gigantea*) or swallow-wort is a common shrub with purplish flowers. The stem yields a milky juice which is applied to wounds, and the seeds are encased in cotton. The flowers are offered to Hanumān and bachelors are married to this plant, before marrying a widow. The *champā* (*Michelia champaka*) is the well-known shrub commonly cultivated round Hindu temples. The pale yellow flowers have the sweet oppressive perfume which is celebrated in the poetry of the Hindus. From the wood of the *champak* the images of Buddha are carved for the temples.[1] This plant is one of the Magnolias. The Mysore thorn (*Cæsalpinia sepiaria*), vern. *chillāri*, is a very thorny shrub with showy yellow flowers, often planted to make hedges. The seeds are used for weighing gold. It is said to be so called because Tīpu Sultān of Mysore planted hedges of it round his fortresses. Another variety with bright orange flowers is cultivated in gardens. *Euphorbia nereifolia* is a thorny shrub growing on dry and stony slopes. Charcoal for gun-

[1] Tennant's Ceylon quoted in Nairne's Flowering Plants of Western India, p. 7.

powder is made from the wood. It is sometimes called the prickly pear, but the broad-leaved plant commonly known as the prickly pear is a species of *Opuntia* which has been introduced into India. *Bharatī* (*Celastrus senegalensis*) is a very common and unattractive thorny shrub found wild and in hedges something like a bramble. *Majnī* (*Trema politoria*) is a small tree or shrub planted on embankments to hold the soil. The leaves are rough and are used as sand-paper for cleaning wood and iron. *Nirgundi* or *meuri* (*Vitex negundo*) is a very common shrub on roadsides and in hedges with very small panicles of lilac or light-blue flowers and a black berry, the size of a pea. The crushed leaves have a strong and unpleasant smell and are applied for headache. The *bhosā* (*Bauhinia racemosa*) is a small, bushy and very crooked tree with small two-lobed leaves looking like butterfly's wings, and yellow flowers. It is conspicuous in the cold season, Gamble says, for its persistent fruit. The Marāthās distribute the leaves of this tree to each other on Dasahra day as a symbol of gold, because Ceylon, which Rāma conquered on Dasahra, was built of gold and also because the Marāthā marauding expeditions started on Dasahra.

Creepers and parasites.

10. The following are some of the commoner creepers. *Māhul* (*Bauhinia Vahlii*) is a gigantic heavy climber with soft pale yellow flowers. The large fat pods are roasted and the seeds extracted and eaten; and the leaves are used for leaf-plates. This is the most troublesome climber in the forest and is found to spread from tree to tree, strangling them and causing the stems to twist. The *belā palās* (*Butea superba*) is a large climber with leaves and flowers resembling those of the *palās* tree; the flowers being of a gorgeous orange colour. *Wāghāti* (*Capparis horrida*) is a climber often seen growing in hedges, with large flowers white and afterwards pink in colour, and presenting a striking appearance. *Eran* (*Zizyphus Œnoplia*) is a climber akin to the wild plum tree and bearing similar fruit. It prefers open bushy places and is covered with small

but very strong thorns, difficult to cut and troublesome to passers-by along the roads. It is much used for making fences for fields—(Gamble). *Gunjā* (*Abrus precatorius*) is a common climber in hedges, with numerous leaflets and pale flowers in crowded racemes. It has round scarlet seeds with black spots, or sometimes nearly white ones, which are used as weights by goldsmiths, each seed being said to weigh 1¾ grains. The seeds are also used to make necklaces and ear-rings. The open pods of the plant showing the scarlet and black seeds are very conspicuous and ornamental. The *narbod* (*Asparagus racemosus*) is a delicate smooth climber with thorns turned downwards, and branchlets divided into very smooth segments so as to give the appearance of a mass of long slender thorns. It has small white fragrant flowers in racemes and red berries. This pretty climber is a near relation of the cultivated asparagus. The people bring home branches of it on the Polā festival and with them sweep the walls and floors of their houses to clear out all insects and purify the house. The best known parasite is *bānda* (*Loranhus longiflorus*) which always attracts notice owing to the brightness of its foliage and the greenish red flowers. Nairne says it resembles the honey-suckle. It grows on many trees but in Seoni particularly infests the mahuā, to which it is causing considerable injury. The *amarbel* (*Cascuta reflexa*) may often be seen with its countless greenish-yellow wire-like stems bare of leaves, and spreading over a small tree or bush which it strangles.[1]

Grasses.

11. Mr. Peake mentions the following grasses as common in the District. Of pasture grasses *kundā* (*Ischoemum pilosum*), *laptī* (*Setaria verticillata*), *chinwā* (*Panicum miliaceum*), *gulu* (*Coix Lachryma*) and *semai* (*Panicum prostratum*). Of fodder and thatching grasses *kusal* (*Heteropogon contortus*), *gunherī* (*Anthisteria scandens*) and *sainā* (*Ischoemum laxum*). *Gun-*

[1] This paragraph is taken from a note by Mr. A. Hunt, Divisional Forest Officer.

heri commonly covers waste land and turns to a bright reddish colour after flowering.

WILD ANIMALS, ETC.

Wild animals.

12. The forests of the District are extensive and are fairly well stocked with game. Tiger and panther are not very common, but deer are found in considerable numbers and both land and water birds are fairly frequent in different parts of the District. During the fifteen years ending 1905 about six tigers and twenty-five panthers were destroyed annually on an average, while in the same period a total of 942 persons were killed by wild animals, more than three-fourths of the whole number of deaths being however due to snake bite. Between 1898 and 1901 the District suffered from the ravages of a man-eating tigress known as the Adegaon man-eater, no less than 74 persons being killed in the locality frequented by this beast during the three years. It is possible however that more than one animal had taken to attacking human beings during this period. The tigress was finally shot during the day-time by the Lodhī proprietor of Lakhnādon over the body of a wood-cutter whom she had killed about five miles from that village. Ganpat Singh, the mālguzār in question, killed her with one shot from a shot-gun loaded with ball and received a reward of two hundred rupees and a gold bangle, the deaths of human beings ceasing with the destruction of this animal. It was said that another man-eater of which this one may have been a descendant committed depredations in the same tract about twelve years previously.

Ducks.

13. The following list of ducks identified in the District has been furnished by Captain Oxley, I.M.S. Among the indigenous varieties are the *nuktā* or comb-duck which is not very common and is met with in small parties only; the whistling teal which is very common; the large whistling teal (*Dendrocygna fulva*); and the cotton teal which in parties of ten or twelve is commonly found on weedy tanks, especially when there are

high rushes. Among migratory ducks are the common teal, met with in large flocks, this being perhaps the earliest visitor and also staying late; the garganey teal (*Querquedula circia*) which is also common and stays very late; the red-crested pochard, a wary duck of which not many can be shot at a time as it leaves the tank at the first discharge; the white-eyed pochard which is common and can be shot in large numbers, as it has a habit of concealing itself in reeds and can be put up singly; the tufted pochard which frequents the largest tanks, keeping in their centre; the pintail, another wary duck, which usually leaves a tank at the first shot; the shoveller, which frequents both tanks and the Waingangā river; the gadwall, an early visitor which is very common and not shy, and is the principal large duck in bags made before Christmas; the ruddy sheldrake, often met with in pairs on the more secluded tanks and along the Nerbudda river; and the wigeon and spot-bill which are rare. Sterndale mentions the demoiselle crane as being shot in Seonī.

Gond fable of Singbāba.

14. It is interesting to note that the leading idea of Mr. Rudyard Kipling's fascinating 'Jungle Book' of which the scene is laid in Seonī appears to be taken from the translation of a Gond fable given in Sterndale's 'Seonī',[1] though of course stories of children being brought up by she-wolves have been reported from various parts of India. In view of the interest attaching to the fable it may be reproduced in full here.

'THE SONG OF SANDSUMJEE.'

'Sandsumjee married six wives, but had no heir, so he 'married a seventh and departed on a journey; during his 'absence, after his relatives had sacrificed to a god, she bore 'a son, Singbāba. The "small wife was sleeping, the other 'six were there;" so they took the babe and threw it into

[1] Appendix, pp. 308, 309.

'the buffalo's stable, placing a puppy by her side, and said, '"Lo! a puppy is born."

'But the buffaloes took care of Singbāba and poured 'milk into his mouth.

'When the six wives went to look for him, they found 'Singbāba playing.

'Thence they took him and threw him to the cows, but 'the cows said, "Let no one hurt him," and poured milk into 'his mouth. So when the six wives went to look again 'whether he was alive or dead, lo! Singbāba was playing.

'Thence they took him and threw him into a well, but 'on the third day when they went to enquire, they found 'Singbāba still playing. So they took him and threw 'him on the tiger's path as the tigers were coming, and they 'heard his cries as they left him. But the tigress felt com-'passion, and said, "It is my child," so she took him to her 'den, and having weaned her cubs fed Singbāba with milk, 'and so he grew up with the cubs. To her one day Sing-'bāba said, "I am naked; I want clothes." So the tigress 'went and sat by the market road till muslin and cloth 'makers came along; on seeing her run at them they dropped 'their bundles and fled, which she took up and brought to 'Singbāba, who clothed himself and kissed her feet.

'Another day he said, "Give me a bow." She again 'went and waited till a sepoy armed with a bow passed by. 'She roared and rushed at him, on which he dropped the 'bow and fled, and she picked it up and brought it to Singbāba, 'who shot birds with it for his little tiger brothers.

'In the meantime Sandsumjee returned home and said: 'Is any one inspired? Has God entered into any one? 'If so, let him arise."

'Then Singbāba received inspiration, and accompanied 'by his big and little brothers went. In the midst of the 'assembly was a Brāhman. Him Singbāba required to get 'up; he refused, whereupon the big brother (tiger) got angry 'and did eat him up. All asked Singbāba "Who are you?"

' "Ask the buffaloes," he replied, telling his little bro- 'ther to go and call his mother. She came, and the three 'species were assembled before the people. "Question them," 'said Singbāba. So they asked, "Who is he?" First the 'buffaloes answered, "Sandsumjee's son", and they told his 'history.

'Then the cows told how he stayed with them two days 'and then was thrown into the well; from thence they knew 'not where he went.

'"Ask my mother," said Singbāba.

'So the tigress told how she weaned her cubs and nour- 'ished him, on which all embraced her feet and established 'her as a god, giving her the six wicked wives. So Singbāba 'became illustrious, and the tigress was worshipped.

'" *Sandsumjee Bābanā id sākā ānd,*
'Of Sandsumjee Bāba this song is,
'*Bhirrī bāns bhirritā sākā ānd,*
'Of Bhirrī bamboo jungle Bhirrī this song is."'

RAINFALL AND CLIMATE.

Rainfall.

15. Rainfall is registered at the tahsil headquarter stations of Seonī and Lakhnādon. The average fall for the 39 years ending 1905-06 was 51 inches, being nearly 52½ inches at Seonī and 50 at Lakhnādon. In six out of these 39 years the annual fall was less than 40 inches and in twenty-one years it exceeded 50 inches. On the whole therefore the District receives a heavy and fairly regular supply of rain. Of the total fall, about 47 inches are received in the five months from June to October and four inches during the remainder of the year. The lightest amount registered was 25 inches in 1899-1900 and the heaviest 81½ inches in 1891-92. The District is seldom visited by hail-storms.

Temperature and climate.

16. An observatory has been established at Seonī since 1870 with an elevation of 2033 feet. The average maximum and minimum temperatures at different seasons of the

year are as follows :—January 79° and 51°; May 104° and 77°; July 84° and 73°; November 81° and 55°. The temperature is thus about 4 degrees cooler than Nāgpur throughout the year. During the rains practically no heat is felt, and at this time the climate of Seonī compares favourably with Jubbulpore. The highest temperature recorded was 112° in May 1906 and the lowest 36° in November 1879. The temperature of the air thus never falls to freezing point, but that on grass may be as much as 13° lower and light frosts are frequent in the winter months. The climate on the plateau is generally excellent, and is free from extreme variations of heat and cold. In late years the hot weather has been interrupted by frequent thunder-storms, and these have the effect of keeping the temperature down. The nights in the hot season are almost invariably cool, and a good indication of the salubrity of the climate is the healthy appearance usually presented by European children resident in Seonī. Of late years however cases of malaria have been somewhat frequent among Europeans.

CHAPTER II.

HISTORY AND ARCHÆOLOGY.

HISTORY.

Early history. The Vākātaka dynasty.

17. From the inscription on a copper-plate found in Seonī combined with others in the Ajantā caves, it has been concluded that a line of princes, the Vākātaka dynasty, was ruling on the Sātpurā plateau from the third century, the name of the perhaps semi-mythical hero who founded it being given as Vindhyasakti. General Cunningham held that Bhāndak in Chānda was the capital of the dynasty, but this conjecture has been disallowed by Drs. Bühler and Fleet on philological grounds, and nothing definite as to its headquarters can be asserted. There is reason for supposing that the plate found in Seonī, which was in the possession of one Jagan Gond of Pindrai, does not as a matter of fact relate to any villages in the District itself; as the family who own it, say that they came from Chānda, but are not aware as to how they obtained the plate.[1] Dr. Fleet says[2] :—'The 'inscription is another record of the Mahārājā Pravarasena II 'of the Vākātaka tribe or dynasty. The place where the 'charter was issued is not recorded. It is dated, in words, in 'the eighteenth year of his government, on the twelfth lunar 'day of the month Phālgun (February-March). It is a non-'sectarian inscription; the object of it being simply to 'record the grant to a Brāhman by Pravarasena II of the 'village of Brahmapūraka in the Bennākārpara *bhāga.*[3] General Cunningham[4] gives the boundaries of Vākātaka as the Mahādeo range on the north and the Godāvari river on

---

[1] From inquiries made by Mr. J. N. Sil, Pleader, Seonī.

[2] Fleet's Gupta Inscriptions, Vol. III, p. 244.

[3] Bhāga, lit. 'a part, a share, division, allotment,' is a technical, territorial term, of rare occurrence, the exact purport of which is not apparent.'

[4] Archæological Reports, Vol. IX, p. 121.

the south, with the Ajantā hills on the west and those at the sources of the Mahānadī on the east. But his deductions from inscriptions are, Dr. Fleet states, of doubtful authority.[1] Other inscriptions belonging to these kings have been found in the old Ellichpur District of Berār and in Chhindwāra, and it is not improbable that Seonī was included in their dominions. Little is known of this dynasty except the names of ten princes and the fact that they contracted alliances with other and better known ruling houses. The architectural remains at Lakhnādon and other places may however be attributed to them or their successors as they could not have been constructed by the Gonds. Dr. Bühler placed the date of Vindhyasakti about A. D. 275. Fleet holds that Devagupta, who is mentioned in an inscription as the father-in-law of Rudrasena II, the fifth *Vākātaka* king, was a king of Magadha who reigned about A.D. 675. According to Dr. Bühler therefore the dynasty would have lasted from the end of the third to the middle of the sixth century, and on Dr. Fleet's hypothesis from the fifth to the eighth century, allowing twenty-five years for the reign of each king.

The Gaur and Chedi kingdoms.

18 Seonī may have subsequently formed part of the kingdom of Gaur, the classical term for part of the United Provinces and Bengal. The kings of western Gaur are mentioned several times in early inscriptions and their territory is supposed to have embraced the Sātpurā plateau. One Gupta, king of Gaur, is recorded to have defeated and killed the king of Kanauj, who was invading Mālwā with 10,000 horse in A. D. 606. General Cunningham derives the name of the Gonds from this Gaur kingdom, subsequently, he thinks, known to the Muhammadans as Gondwāna. Seonī probably passed to the Kalachuri or Chedi dynasty, who had their headquarters at Tewar near Jubbulpore, and held an important position from the ninth to the twelfth

[1] Gupta Inscriptions, p. 234, note 5.

centuries. These princes were Haihaya Rājputs and traditions of Haihaya rule remain in the District.

The Chandel generals Alhā and Udal.

19. The Chedi kings were probably ousted by the Chandels of Mahobā. A local legend speaks of a princess Sonā Rānī who lived at Amodāgarh above the Hirrī river, and at Kohgarh [1] and was carried away by Alhā and Udal, the celebrated Banāphar generals of the Chandel kings. The following passage from the history of Alhā, translated by Dr. Grierson, [2] may possibly refer to a raid of the Chandels into Seonī. Udal says to his brother for whom he is desirous of finding a wife 'A bride has been born in Naināgarh 'in the palace of king Indarman (her brother). She is the 'daughter of Somdeva and is grown up and her father 'demands a tiger-fighting bridegroom. Great is the desire in 'my heart to celebrate the marriage of my brother and I 'would wed him to Sonāvati.' Alhā replies 'Powerful is the 'king of Naināgarh and very mighty in arms. He has thrown 'into prison fifty-two would-be bridegrooms and seven hun-'dred and fifty thousand attendants of their marriage proces-'sions.' [3] Udal cries shame on his brother for his cowardice and prays his tutelary goddess to give him victory over Naināgarh which he determines to invade. The goddess also dissuades him saying 'Mighty is the king of Naināgarh 'whose name is Indarman. Fifty-two minarets has his fort-'ress and fifty-three thousand markets. The wedding crowns 'of fifty-two suitors has he cast away to float upon the river 'at Guraiyā ghāt. Lord Udal you will be killed. For 'nothing will you lose your life.' Udal however would not be dissuaded and set out to invade Indarman's capital. A battle was fought and finally Sonāvatī was carried off. The only circumstances connecting the story with Seonī are the local legend still prevalent, the resemblance of the name of

---

[1] Now in Bālāghāt.

[2] Indian Antiquary, Vol. XIV, 1885, p. 211.

[3] Dr. Grierson's foot-note. 'This was a common custom in those days. 'When a Rājput gave his daughter in marriage it was a rule of honour only 'to give her at the point of the sword.'

the queen, and the mention of Guraiyā ghāt, which may be Gwārighāt on the Nerbudda. So far as is known no identification of Naināgarh has been attempted by Dr. Grierson.

The Mandlā Gond kingdom.

20. The period of authentic history in Seonī scarcely begins till the sixteenth century, when part of the District fell under the dominion of the rising Gond dynasty of Garhā-Mandlā. Ghansor, Chauri and Dongartāl were three of the fifty-two forts included in the possessions of Rājā Sangrām Sā in 1530 and the territories attached to these made up the bulk of the present District. A century and a half afterwards the Mandlā Rājā was obliged to call in the help of Bakht Buland, the Deogarh prince, to assist in the suppression of a revolt of two Pathān adventurers, Azim Khān and Lunde Khān, and in return for this ceded to him the territories now constituting Seonī. The rebels were defeated at Pratāppur near Seonī, and according to a common story Lunde Khān's headless trunk went on fighting after his death until he reached his house. His tomb is worshipped by the people. Bakht Buland came to take possession of his new dominions and was engaged one day in a hunting expedition near Seonī, when he was attacked by a wounded bear. An unknown Pathān adventurer, Rāj Khān, came to his assistance and killed the bear, and Bakht Buland was so pleased with his dexterous courage that he made him governor of the Dongartāl tāluka, then in a very unsettled condition. The following extracts are taken from a picturesque account of this incident given by Mr. Sterndale,[1] to whom it was related according to his own account by a Muhammadan Fakīr, a descendant of Raj Khān.

Rāj Khān, founder of the Dīwān family.

21. 'Early one morning, in the year 1701, a solitary 'horseman rode at a foot-pace towards 'the town of Chhapāra. The young 'Pathān—for so he was—was attired as

[1] Sterndale's Seonī or Camp Life on the Sātpurā Range, ed. 1887, pp. 178–180.

'a warrior of the time; a steel morion, inlaid with gold 'of Gujarāti work, with a falling curtain of chain mail, covered 'his head, and was bound round with a gay scarf. A shirt 'of chain mail covered his body, and massive gauntlets of 'inlaid steel protected his arms from the wrist to the elbow. 'A light round black shield, with bosses of polished brass, 'was slung at his back, and his only offensive weapon was a '*talwār* or scimitar, of unusual size and curvature. He rode 'slowly up the ghāt at Ganeshganj, and down again on the 'southern face of the little range, and then he saw the town 'of Chhapāra lying before him, with its groves of mango 'trees, now dotted with the tents of a large camp, for Bakht 'Buland, the Rājā of Deogarh, was there inspecting the ter-'ritory which had been recently assigned to him by Narendra 'Sāh, the Gond prince, whom he had assisted in regaining 'his kingdom. On the further side of the river was the camp 'of the Thākur of Sulemā, who had come to pay his respects 'to his new lord. A sound of drums and horns now made 'the young soldier look out ahead, and as he approached the 'town he noticed a gallant cavalcade issuing forth from the 'camp. First came runners bearing silver maces, proclaim-'ing aloud the title of their prince; then a roll of kettle-drums 'proclaimed the advent of a body of cavalry; then some 'elephants bearing officers of state, followed by another body 'of cavalry; then a body of musicians and singers, rehearsing 'the glories of their lord, preceded a huge tusker elephant, 'flanked by two lines of horsemen, and from the silver *howdā* 'and regal umbrella the young Pathān knew that the short, 'swarthy man, dressed in simple white, whose attendants 'fanned him with peacock's feathers, was none other than 'Rājā Bakht Buland. Springing from his horse as the rājā 'passed, the trooper made a low obeisance, and, as the retinue 'swept past, he vaulted to his saddle, and joined the throng of 'horsemen that followed. Bakht Buland, like all warlike 'chiefs of his time, was passionately fond of the chase, and 'this grand pageant, which looked like a visit of state, if not

'a going forth to battle, was nothing else than a hunting party 'to some hills in the vicinity, in one of which lived an 'enormous bear, which was the terror of the surrounding 'villages. When the hills were reached, the drums and 'heralds were silenced, and the cavalry spread themselves out 'into the plain on either side, to intercept those animals that 'might break away. The rājā was posted on his elephant at the 'most promising spot, and the less likely posts were assigned 'to his officers. The hill was driven by several hundred men, 'and matters were so arranged that the bear broke out just 'in front of the rājā. Now there are many elephants who 'will stand the fiercest charge by a tiger, who have the 'greatest fear of a bear, and the huge tusker on which 'Bakht Buland sat was one of these. No sooner did 'he smell his foe than he became unsteady, and at 'the roar which answered the prince's shot, the ele-'phant fairly turned tail, in spite of the most strenu-'ous exertions on the part of the *mahaut* to keep 'him straight, and there was every probability of his 'taking altogether to flight. The utmost confusion prevailed 'for some seconds, which the young Pathān quickly took 'advantage of. Springing from his horse, he unsheathed his 'heavy blade, and whirling it round his head, he threw himself 'before the enraged bear. Open-mouthed the savage brute 'rushed at him, but, uttering a shout of 'Bismillāh! Al 'rahmān, Al rahīm, the trooper balanced himself for the blow, 'and as though he were indulging in some harmless feat of 'arms delivered a trenchant slash; the bright blade glanced 'in the sunlight like a flash from a thundercloud, and, 'wielded by a nervous arm, with the peculiar drawing cut of 'the Indian swordsman, it spread through the shaggy hair 'and brawny neck, and a headless body rolled on the ground 'to the feet of the rājā's elephant. Calmly wiping his drip-'ping *talwār* on the bear's hide, the Pathān returned it to its 'sheath, and, laying the head before the rājā, made a low 'salāam.'

The Dīwāns of Chhapāra and Seonī.

22. Shortly afterwards the Deogarh Rājā, according to local tradition, placed his relative Rājā Rām Singh in possession of the Seonī tract. The headquarters were then at Chhapāra and Rājā Rām Singh built the fort there. While governor of Dongartāl, Rāj Khān, at the instigation of Bakht Buland and probably with the assistance of his father-in-law, a resident of Partābgarh in the Bhandāra District, attacked and took Sāngarhī in the Bhandāra District in the name of the Rājā of Deogarh. He died in Sāngarhī in 1743 and was succeeded by his son Muhammad Khān. In 1743 Raghujī, the Marāthā ruler of Berār, assumed the government of Nāgpur and consequently of Deogarh and Seonī. Notwithstanding the death of his legitimate sovereign and the usurpation of the Bhonslas, Muhammad Khān held Sāngarhī for three years in his name. Raghujī, struck it is said with Muhammad Khān's fidelity, offered him the Seonī District if he would give up Sāngarhī. He consented and repaired to Chhapāra, from which place he administered Seonī with the title of Dīwān, and at his death in 1759 is said to have left the country populous and well cultivated. He was not however uniformly fortunate in his government, for on one occasion during his absence at Nāgpur the Mandlā Rājā attacked and captured Chhapāra. The Dīwān, advancing from Nāgpur with large forces, speedily drove back the Mandlā garrison, and the Thānwar and Waingangā were then again declared to be the boundaries between the Mandlā and Seonī kingdoms. Majīd Khān, the eldest son of Muhammad Khān, succeeded his father about 1761 and to him succeeded in 1774 his son Muhammad Amīn Khān, who removed his headquarters to Seonī and built the present residence of the Dīwān's family. Up to this time Seonī was a village of no importance. After administering the District for twenty-four years with much credit to himself, he died in 1798 and was succeeded by his eldest son Muhammad Zamān Khān.

Raids of the Gonds and Pindāris.

23. Chhapāra, even after the removal of the Dīwān to Seoni, was a considerable place and at the close of the eighteenth century is said to have contained about 9000 houses with 40,000 inhabitants. During Zamān Khān's time it was twice sacked by the Pindāris and is now a mere village. On one occasion the Pindāris descended on the town from the hills behind it during the progress of the fair, and they again attacked it while the Pathān garrison was absent at Nāgpur, attending the court for the Diwāli festival. On this raid it is said that the Pindāris obtained so much gold that they did not care to take anything else. A tombstone near the Waingangā bridge, called the *ganj shahīd*, still marks the site where 40,000 persons are said to have been buried in a common grave.[1] At the same period the District was harried by bands of Gond robbers, whom the Diwān was incapable of suppressing, and in 1805 Raghujī, either from dissatisfaction at the state of affairs, or from the wish to obtain a larger revenue to recoup him for the territories ceded to the British by the peace of Deogaon (1803), summoned Zamān Khān to his court at Nāgpur and appointed in his stead as governor of Seonī one Bengāji Bhatonea. Zamān Khān appears to have sullenly resented his supercession, refusing the rent-free villages offered to him and demanding the restitution of his hereditary property of Dongartāl. He did not however succeed in obtaining this, and on his death shortly afterwards his widow accepted some land near Seonī and the village of Bordi which were assigned revenue-free for her support. In 1808 one Kharak Bhārti Gosain, a Baniā, who had previously been moneylender to the Dīwān's family, obtained the government from Raghujī by an offer of three lakhs a year for it. He built a small fort at Adegaon and is said to have rackrented and oppressed the people to such a degree that some recently settled tracts like Uglī became entirely deserted.

[1] According to another account the 40,000 perished in the battle between the rulers of Seonī and Mandlā referred to above.

The revenue of the District is said to have fallen from three and a quarter to less than two lakhs between 1811 and 1818, in which year Seonī became British territory, being ceded by the treaty which followed the battle of Sītābaldi.

Extracts from old correspondence.

24. The following extracts from the early correspondence in the District office are sufficiently interesting to be reproduced as showing the matters in which our officers were interested on first taking over the Disrtict. The first is a report by the Deputy Commissioner relating to the capture of a gang of Thags:—

'In the year 1824 or 1825 (I am not certain which, as I 'have not the proceedings with me in camp), a party of 'very suspicious persons, 23 in number, were passing through 'this District and along the high road, the number of the 'party and their appearance altogether exciting suspicion; 'steps were taken to secure them and in doing this some 5 'or 6 managed to effect their escape or to avoid being seized: 'the remainder were sent to Seonī. In the examination be- 'fore me I did everything in my power to discover what they 'really were, but without success. They all gave the most 'plausible account of themselves; some said they had been 'to Poona, Hyderābād and other places to see their brothers 'and relations who were sepoys. Others said they had been 'to the southward in search of employment, and some who 'were Hindus stated they had been on a pilgrimage to Setu- 'bandh Rāmeshwar; and they accounted for so many being 'together by saying that they accidentally met at Rāmtek and 'other places and kept together for safety's sake.

'The party were chiefly Musalmāns, few of them had 'arms of any description; and no suspicious article of any 'kind was found in their possession; notwithstanding all 'this the impression on my mind was that they were a body 'of Thags and one of them named Azīm Khān appeared to be 'their leader; to ascertain the point I at once determined to 'send them to Jubbulpore in the hope that if they really were

'what I took them to be, Kalyān Singh and Motī, two Thags 'in confinement at Jubbulpore, would recognise some of them.

'My suspicions were well grounded for Kalyān Singh 'and Motī at once knew a few of the party, and the latter 'accompanied by two of the gang returned to Seonī and 'pointed out the spot where they had murdered four indivi-'duals (two men, one boy and a female) near the village of 'Sukhtarā which is on the high road and 12 miles distant 'from Seonī; the bodies were found in a dry sandy nullah a 'little way off the road and were brought in for my inspec-'tion. Karīm Khān who appeared to have been the chief 'and most active party in the strangulation of these unfortu-'nate individuals, was in 1826 sentenced to be hanged and 'his body exposed in chains on a gibbet close to the spot 'which formed the scene of these sanguinary and cold blood-'ed murders. No murder by Thags has since, I am happy 'to say, occurred in this District.'

The following is the copy of a report by the District Officer, on the institution of slavery and his opinion as to its prohibition:—

'I have the honour to acknowledge your letter of the '24th ultimo forwarding a Circular from the Nizām-adālat on 'the subject of slaves.

'In regard to the first point—the legal rights of the 'masters over their slaves recognised by this court—I am 'unable to state definitively what has been the practice ob-'served heretofore, as I am not aware of any cases involving 'the question which have come under investigation. The 'view of the matter however by which I should myself be 'guided, as that which appears to me most in conformity 'with the views of respectable natives themselves, is that the 'property of a *bonā fide* slave is the property of his master, 'saving what the latter may himself have bestowed, and that 'the slave's person in like manner is claimable by the mas-'ter, for the performance of all lawful services such as may 'be obtained from others for hire; including as regards

'female Musalmān slaves, concubinage though not prostitu-'tion; and I should here observe that I should consider the 'slave as having a reciprocal claim on the master for food, 'clothing, lodging, which principle has been observed in 'cases decided at Jubbulpore.

'On the second point, the power of the master over the 'person of his slaves I should consider permissible any act 'of coercion which a court of justice would not prohibit on 'the part of a parent; but anything partaking of cruelty or 'vindictiveness I should consider it incumbent on me to 'check in either instance by the infliction of a punishment on 'the aggressing party; though I should not deem myself 'authorised directly to liberate the slave on this ground; 'and I am indeed not aware of any definite distinction as 'regards the acts admissible, which I should admit between 'this relation and that of master and servant; as the liberty 'possessed by the latter to quit an irksome service, furnishes 'him necessarily with a safeguard much more effectual than 'any minute interference of the court in his favour.

'In illustration of the above view I may mention that 'not long ago a Musalmān of Seoni requested my permis-'sion to place an iron on the leg of his slave, who he stated 'would not obey his orders. My answer was that kind and 'judicious treatment would be his only effectual means of ob-'taining work from him, and that I could on no account 'listen to such a request. I believe that other Musalmāns in 'court at the time viewed this as the only just order that 'could have been passed.

'The indulgence extended to Musalmān slaves in cri-'minal matters refers I conclude to their conduct towards 'their masters only; and here I should view the relation in 'the same light as above indicated, *viz.*, all smaller offences 'such as parents are in the habit of themselves correcting 'if committed by a slave I should consider as more fit for 'the cognisance of the master himself than of a court of 'justice. While as regards all more serious offences, I

'should recognise no distinction between slaves and other 'individuals.

'In answer to the third point enquired of by the Sec- 'retary to the Law Commission, I am unaware of any cases 'in which I should afford less protection to slaves than to 'free persons against other wrong-doers than their masters; 'but in all such cases I should consider the latter as a party 'concerned; and would hold him responsible if he did not 'use his endeavours to protect his slaves.

'I need scarcely add that in the above view I have been 'guided more by the dictates of my own judgment and what 'I have been able to gather of the views of respectable 'natives themselves than by any reference to the codes of 'Law. Amongst Muhammadans I believe that capture in 'an infidel land is the only authorised source of slavery, so 'that a legal right to the possession of a slave can scarcely 'be said at the present day to exist among them; while as 'regards Hindus, from the Vyavasthās on record and their 'own views, there would appear to be no sufficient ground 'for the governing powers hesitating to prevent cruelty or 'violence towards the slaves.

'In this view I am aware of no distinction that I should 'make between a Muhammadan and Hindu slave-owner save 'in regard to concubinage, which the former view more in 'the light of marriage, the latter of prostitution and contami- 'nation, considering the relation as conferring reciprocal 'rights; and without giving to the master the power of exer- 'cising cruelty or violence any more than is possessed at all 'times by a parent, I should not be disposed to make any 'distinction in regard to persons of any other race. Slavery 'in this part is a widely different thing from what it is in 'some parts of the Deccan, being in fact much more of the 'nature of a domestic tie than a condition of constraint. 'The obtaining possession of children either by purchase or 'gift is a thing which the frequency of famines occurring in 'a country only thus far civilised renders so inviting, that I

'doubt whether any law will put a stop to it at present, 'while it may be questioned whether its entire prohibition 'consists at all times with charity and the public good. And 'the maintenance of the relation on the footing above indi- 'cated, appears to me all that is necessary in conjunction 'with the laws prohibitory of slave-selling as a trade in order 'to prevent it engendering serious evils. Already there is 'a very general feeling amongst natives that under the 'British rule, more in consequence of its moral influence than 'any direct enactment, there is little advantage in the posses- 'sion of a slave; for as they either are not permitted or do 'not venture forcibly to detain them in their keeping, in- 'stances are daily becoming more frequent of slaves on reach- 'ing maturity deserting even from masters who have treated 'them with uniform kindness and generally speaking carry- 'ing away with them a portion of that master's property.'

Early British administration.

25. The ceded Districts appear at first to have been administered by the officers commanding detachments under the orders of the Governor-General's Agent at Jubbulpore, Mr. Molony, and subject to the general supervision of Mr. (Sir Richard) Jenkins, the Resident at Nāgpur. Seonī was in a very disturbed condition, being scoured by bands of armed Gonds who plundered the defenceless inhabitants and against whom the regular troops were powerless. Certain places were proverbially dangerous, and an old saying still remembered in the District runs:—'He who can cross in safety the Nerbudda river and pass by Ghāt Piparia, Raichur, Dhūma and the Jobā stream, would be a man of no common valour and worthy to be kissed by his mother.' Major O'Brien, the officer in charge of Seonī District, took steps to remedy this state of affairs and raised a force of police, while the landowners were made responsible for the security of the roads from the attacks of robbers and wild beasts, the country being at this time infested with tigers. The Thākur of Dhūma and the Lodhī family of

Lakhnādon long enjoyed some concessions of land revenue which were granted to them in lieu of this service. At the same period the main road from Nāgpur to Jubbulpore was haunted by bands of Thags, who carried on their infamous trade of murder with such secrecy and success, that Sleeman relates an occurrence when a native gentleman travelling with his wife and child and servants was strangled with his whole party at Lakhnādon, on the opposite side of the road and within hearing of the officers' tents of a detachment of troops, without any alarm being given. In 1821 Najāf Khān, the nephew of the last Dīwān, was granted the Gondī estate of 89 villages on quit-rent tenure by the British, and this his son, Muhammad Alī Khān,[1] still continues to enjoy. At the same time the Kedārpur estate was given to another branch of the family.

The Mutiny.

26. During the Mutiny the tranquillity of the District was disturbed only by the revolt of a Lodhī landholder in the north, who joined the rebels of Jubbulpore and Narsinghpur; they established themselves on some hills overlooking the Jubbulpore road near Sukrī, from which they made excursions to burn and plunder villages. In November Major Ternan surprised the camp of the rebels and captured most of the leaders. At that time the garrison of Seonī consisted of only one company of Madras Native Infantry, but at the end of 1857 a body of Nāgpur Irregular troops marched up from Kamptee, and were placed at the disposal of the District Officer, Lieutenant Thomson. He marched through the District with them, clearing it of rebels, and then passed on the troops to Major Waddington in Mandlā. The representative of the Dīwān family firmly supported the British Administration.

ARCHÆOLOGY.

Archæology.

27. The archæological remains are of slight importance. The oldest objects in the District are perhaps some cromlechs near Sarekhā

[1] Muhammad Alī Khān died in 1906.

consisting of large stone slabs standing four or five together with another laid along their tops, and arranged in circles forty or fifty feet in diameter. These are believed to be of Indo-Scythian origin. The copper-plate inscription in the possession of the Gond mālguzār of Pindrai in the Seonī tahsil has been noticed at the beginning of this chapter. A number of Hindu and Jain temples formerly existed at Ghansor and Lakhnādon, but their sites are now marked only by heaps of stones, the greater part of the materials having been removed and used for new buildings or bridges. Some sculptures from Ghansor have been placed for ornament on the steps of the Dalsāgar tank at Seonī. They are in the mediæval Brahmanic style and some are fairly graceful. In Ghansor itself there is a fine statue of a Jain Thīrthankar which is now worshipped by the villagers as Nāga Bāba, and the remains of a number of temples also exist. Much of the stonework of the Lakhnādon temples has been utilised for the construction of the Chhapāra bridge over the Waingangā, and other bridges on the Nāgpur-Jubbulpore road. Two fresh temples have also been constructed in Lakhnādon from the remains of the old ones, which from their style of architecture appear to have belonged to the ninth or tenth century. Both in Lakhnādon and Ghansor the perforated onyx beads called Sulaimān's beads may be picked up among the ruins. The local belief as to these is that Solomon, who used to fly over the earth, dropped one whenever he said a prayer. They probably really belonged to the rosaries used by Jain monks and others.[1] Ashtā has three old temples, on one of which is a defaced inscription, and there is also one at Dondīwāra near Jenitolā. Temples from two to four hundred years old exist at Kanhiwāra, Motiatolā, Sohāgpur, Bīsāpur and in the Gosain Math or monastery at Seonī. The temple at Bīsāpur is said to have been built by Palai Rānī, widow of the Gond Rājā Bhopat and a favourite popular heroine. The ruins of the palace

---

[1] I am indebted for this conjecture to my Assistant, Mr. Hīra Lāl.



JAIN TEMPLE IN SEONI.

Photo.-Mechl. Dept , Thomason College, Roorkee.

of Sonā Rānī, the queen who was wedded to Allhā, and of an old fort are to be seen at Amodāgarh, near Uglī, on the Hirri river. On the Bhīmgarh hill, twelve miles from Ghansor, there are the remains of a large number of statues of rude construction, representing horse and foot-soldiers. Other remains are the two forts of Chhapāra built by the Gonds and the Dīwān family of Seonī. Along the southern spurs of the Sātpurās, the remains of a number of other Gond forts are visible at Umargarh, Bhainsāgarh, Partābgarh and Kohwāgarh.

CHAPTER III.

POPULATION.

STATISTICS OF POPULATION.

Statistics of area and population, density, towns, and villages.

28. The area and population of the District in 1901 were 3206 square miles and 327,709 persons, Seonī being the fourteenth District of the Central Provinces[1] in point of area and twelfth in population. The area arrived at by cadastral survey at Khān Bahādur Aulād Husain's settlement (1895-98) was 3366 square miles, or 160 square miles in excess of that given by professional survey. The District is divided into two tahsīls, Lakhnādon lying to the north and Seonī to the south. The figures of area and population of the two tahsīls in 1901 were as follows :—

	Area.	Population.
Seonī	1648	192,364
Lakhnādon	1558	135,345

The Seonī tahsīl has thus a slightly larger area and a considerably greater population than Lakhnādon. Up to 1873 the District had a third tahsīl at Katangī, but in that year the bulk of the Katangī tahsīl was transferred to Bālāghāt and the remainder included in Seonī. The total density of population is 102 persons per square mile, as against 114 for British Districts of the Provinces. Seonī is more thickly peopled than Lakhnādon, the respective figures of density being 117 and 87 persons respectively. The Barghāt Station-house area is the most populous tract of the District with 171 persons to the square mile, excluding Government forest. Next to this come Seonī and Keolāri, while the Ghansor and Lakhnādon Station-house areas are the most sparsely populated. According to the census tables of 1901, the District had one town, Seonī, and 1389 inhabited villages. The

[1] Excluding Berār.

latest statistics show one town and 1751 villages, of which 324 are uninhabited and 1427 inhabited. At settlement 1457 villages were recognised, excluding apparently those recently established on the ryotwāri system. The total of 1752 includes 170 ryotwāri and 7 forest villages. At the time of writing 197 ryotwāri villages are recognised, but of these 28 have nearly gone out of cultivation. The Seonī tahsīl contains 50 and the Lakhnādon tahsil 147 ryotwāri villages. The population of Seoni in 1901 was 11,864 persons or 3½ per cent of that of the District. Besides Seonī, only Chhapāra (3884) and Lakhnādon (2148) had more than 2000 persons in 1901, while ten villages had a population of 1000 or more. More than half the inhabited villages contained less than 200 persons.

Variation of population.

29. At the 30 years' settlement the District was apparently taken to include the Raigarh-Bichhia tract, which had previously belonged to Mandlā and was immediately afterwards formed into the Baihar tahsil of the new Bālāghāt District. Subsequently, in 1873, the bulk of the Katangī tahsīl, with an area of 533 square miles and population of 120,999 persons, was transferred to Bālāghāt, and 51 villages lying below the Kurai ghāt on the southern border from Seonī to Nāgpur. On other occasions 32 villages were transferred to the Seonī tahsīl from the western portion of Chhindwāra, and the Adegoan estate of 90 villages from Chhindwāra to the Lakhnādon tahsīl. In 1888 two villages from Seonī were given to Mandlā and in 1889 eight villages from Mandlā to Seonī. In 1893 and 1894 small changes of forest area were made between Seoni and Nāgpur. The constitution of the District has thus been largely changed since 1866, when the first enumeration took place. The details of the changes of territory are not in all cases available and the adjustment of the figures of population at past enumerations to allow for them has thus been imperfect. The population of the present area in 1881 was about 336,000 and disclosed an increase of

more than 17 per cent, on that of 1872. In 1891 the population was 371,000, giving an increase of 10 per cent on 1881; this was about equivalent to the Provincial average. The natural increase was only 7 per cent and the District was considered to have gained by immigration. The average birth-rate during the decade 1881-90 was 40 per mille and the death-rate nearly 33 per mille. The years 1885 and 1886 were unhealthy, the number of deaths exceeding that of births. These conditions were attributed to the poor harvests and to epidemics of malaria. The increase in the Seonī tahsīl was larger than in Lakhnādon. In 1901 the population was 328,000, showing the decrease of 43,000 persons or nearly 12 per cent on the figures of 1891; the population of Seonī tahsīl declined by 12·3 and that of Lakhnādon by 10·7 per cent. The number of deaths exceeded that of births in the years 1895-97 inclusive and epidemics of cholera occurred in five years. The District was severely distressed in 1896 and 1897, but escaped more lightly in 1900. The registered excess of deaths over births during the decade was nearly 13,000 and the census disclosed a decline of population larger by 30,000 than this figure; it was estimated that 6500 persons emigrated to Assam during the decade, and the remainder of the large difference must be attributed to the deficient reporting of deaths in the famine years. The average decennial birth-rate between 1891 and 1901 was 33 per mille and the death-rate 36 per mille, both figures being considerably lower than the Provincial average and indicating defective registration of vital statistics. In the five years from 1901 to 1906 the excess of births over deaths has been abnormal, and the natural increase of population in these years works out to 38,000 persons, or only 5000 less than the decrease between 1891 and 1901.

Migration.

30. In 1901 the proportion of the inhabitants returned as born in the District was only 82 per cent, this being very low for the Central Provinces. But it may be affected by the transfers

of territory which have taken place. A considerable amount of migration to and fro appears to take place between Seonī and Mandlā, Bālāghāt and Chhindwāra, and a smaller interchange of population with Jubbulpore and Nāgpur.

Diseases.

31. The following remarks on the general health of the people are taken from a note by Captain Oxley, I.M.S. :—'Owing to the 'high elevation of the District the hot weather is distinctly 'mild and in recent years thunderstorms have frequently 'occurred at this season. These have had the effect of keeping the temperature down, and the usual differences of 'moisture and temperature between the hot weather and 'the rains are perhaps less marked in Seonī than in other 'parts of the Province. These conditions probably contribute in no small degree to the fact that liver abscess is 'almost unknown, though it is true that here as elsewhere 'at the commencement of the rains bowel disturbances 'become more common. At the beginning of the rains too 'it is not uncommon to meet with cases of mild fever 'which last only a short time and are not, in my opinion, 'true malaria, but analogous to the seven-day fever described by Rogers as prevailing in Calcutta. Cases of enlarged 'spleen are not infrequent, the bulk of them coming from 'below the hills on the Nāgpur side or from the villages in 'the north-east along the Nerbudda. All the cases seen by 'me have been due to true malarial cachexia. Eye diseases 'are very common, especially granular ophthalmia, and this 'disease is far more often met with in men than women. 'The general death-rate is always highest in September and 'October. Outbreaks of epidemic disease are uncommon, 'perhaps on account of the smallness of the villages, and the 'fact that no very large fairs are held in the District.'

The number of deaths from cholera exceeded 1000 in only five years between 1872 and 1904, and in three of these, 1896, 1897 and 1900, severe distress was prevalent. No cases were reported between 1900 and 1905 and on the

whole the District may be said to be noticeably free from this disease. Small-pox appears to be endemic, but the death-rate has only once exceeded 2 per mille of population, in 1882, when the number of deaths reported was 743. The District has hitherto been practically free from plague. An outbreak of lathyrism occurred in 1897, and a number of persons may be seen in the smaller villages with their limbs more or less paralysed. But the people are well aware that the disease arises from the consumption of tiurā (*Lathyrus sativus*) and are unlikely to eat this pure except as an alternative to starvation. Leprosy is distinctly rare and the proportion of blind is somewhat lower than the Provincial average.

Language.

32. The Bundelī dialect of Western Hindī is spoken by 173,000 persons or 53 per cent of the population and Gondī by 100,000 persons or 31 per cent. In the south Marāthī is the language of 20,000 persons, while Urdū is returned by 11,000; this latter figure is a fairly high one for the Central Provinces and is due to the comparatively large number of Muhammadans in Seonī. Bundelī is the form of Hindī prevalent in the west and north of the Central Provinces. It differs from Urdū in some points of inflection. In Bundelī the long *a* of the terminations of substantives and adjectives is turned unto *o* as *dāno* for *dānā*; *Chhapāro paile baro gaon hato*, for *Chhapāra pahile barā gaon thā* (Chhapāra was formerly a big village). The change is also made in the participial form of verbs, as *khao* for *khāyā*. Another tendency is to leave out the aspirate if it is not the initial letter of a word, as in the example quoted above *pahile* becomes *paile*. Similarly *gahirā*, deep, would be *gaira*, *lahar*, wave, *lair*, and so on. The *ko* of the oblique case is also changed to *e* as *ham gharé jāt* for *ham ghar ko jāté hain* (I am going home). If the root of a verb ends in long *a* it is changed into *ai* to form the verbal noun as *khaibo* for *khānā*. In the future the termination *gā* is not used in Bundelī, but the Gujarāti termination *shai*

altered into *hai* is used, as *u marhai* for *wah maregā* (he will die). The past tense of the substantive verb *thā*, *the*, is changed to *hato*, *hate* and the long *a* in the termination of the participle is shortened, as for instance *wah jātā thā* would become *u jāt hato*. In Bundelī as in Urdū the particle *ne* always follows the nominative to transitive verbs in the past tenses, and in this respect it differs from Eastern Hindī. Bundelī has a small literature dating from the time of Chhatar Sāl of Pannā and his immediate predecessors and successors of the early part of the eighteenth century. The Ponwārs who number about 17,000 persons have an impure jargon of their own, the basis of which is Eastern Hindī, mixed freely with forms coming from the original homes of the Ponwār tribe in western Rājputāna, and with Marāthī. About four-fifths of the whole number of Gonds in Seonī are still returned as speaking their own language, and the number of speakers of Gondī is larger than in any District of the Province except Chhindwāra. The Marāthī found in the south of the District is the dialect of Nāgpur. In this form the long vowels are usually shortened and the dative is formed in *s* as *bāpās* 'to the father.'

Occupation.

33. There is little to remark on in the returns of occupation. Of the whole population 70 per cent were supported by pasture and agriculture in 1901 and nearly 9 per cent more by general labour. Landowners and tenants comprise nearly half the total population and labourers of all kinds nearly a third. The District has hitherto been almost solely agricultural, and with the exception of a small number of personal servants and persons occupied in trade and commerce, the remainder of the population are engaged in supplying the simple wants of a rural tract as potters, cane and bamboo-workers, cotton-spinners and weavers, blacksmiths, leather-workers and carpenters. Seonī has until recently lain at a considerable distance from any line of rail, and these industries have therefore suffered less from the competition of

imported and machine-made products than in other Districts with greater facilities for trade. In 1901, 2600 persons, including dependents, were engaged in religious services and 2300 were beggars.

RELIGION.

Statistics of religion. Village gods.

34. The figures of religion show that Hindus constitute 55 per cent of the population, Animists 40 per cent and Muhammadans 4½ per cent. There are 1282 Jains and 183 Christians. The proportion of Animists is very high, owing to the large numbers of Gonds in the District. But the beliefs of the nominal Hindu population are also largely tinctured with nature-worship. Every village has a number of local deities to whom all classes pay reverence. The principal of these are Devī, also known as Khermāta or the earth-goddess, the old indigenous deity having probably in this case been transformed into an incarnation of the leading Hindu goddess. She is represented by an image or simply a stone placed on a platform by the side of which a flag is planted, and is worshipped principally at the two 9 days' festivals called Nao-Durgā in the spring and autumn. As elsewhere, grain is sown on these occasions in pots and allowed to sprout for nine days as a sort of forecast of the spring and autumn crops. If an epidemic of small-pox threatens, the people proceed to Devī's shrine and cook their food there. Tuesday is the day specially set apart for her worship. Hardaul Lāla, a deified Rājput prince, is a common village godling. His shrine should have a trident and a flag. He is worshipped at marriages and also when epidemic diseases break out among the cattle. If cholera has attacked the village, the people go to his shrine and eat there thick *chapātis* of grain. Friday is his especial day. The vermilion-painted figure raised on a slab, which represents Mahābīr or Hanumān is found in every village. Māl is the deity of the Ahīrs, and any old man of this caste who has acquired a

reputation for piety may be deified after his death and then becomes Māl. He protects the cattle of his votaries from disease and is especially worshipped by the Ahīrs at the Diwāli festival. Bhainsāsur is the god of buffaloes and a small platform is put up to him inside the house at the place where the buffaloes are tied up. Bāgh Deo, the tiger-god, is venerated by the Ponwārs, and if any Ponwār is killed by a tiger he is deified and worshipped as Bāgh Deo. One Ponwār proprietor is said to have raised a shrine in his house to his father who was killed by a tiger; the spirit of the dead man must be placated, as otherwise he will assume the form of a tiger and come and worry the cattle of his descendants. A similar belief prevails among the Gonds. Hulerā Deo is a Gond deity, but Ponwārs and others also worship him. A platform is erected to him under a *semar* or cotton tree (*Bombax malabaricum*) outside the village and milch cows and calves are his especial charge. If a cow runs dry a cocoanut is offered to him, or in serious cases a goat. He is sometimes also placed in the cowshed in the shape of a small figure on a bamboo pole in order that he may watch over his charges, or a figure of him is tied in a piece of rope round the cow's neck. Matia is a mischievous godling who is revered by the lower castes. He blows up the dust-storms and worries the people in other ways. When a feast is held, a cake is prepared, and a number of hairs are mixed in the dough. This is set apart for Matia, and he will come and pull out the hairs one by one before he eats the cake, and will thus be kept quiet and prevented from interfering with the festival.

Rural superstitions.

35. Mr. Chapman remarks:—'Superstition is of 'course still very rife, but the grosser 'and more criminal forms are most 'certainly dying out. This is the opinion of several old 'inhabitants of the District whom I have spoken to on 'the subject. Witchcraft and sorcery do not here exer'cise the same terrible influence on the lives of the people

'which they are still potent to effect in Chhattīsgarh. I 'think the schools have something to say to this feature of 'improvement among the people'. The ordinary magical beliefs are found in existence, but are probably being gradually discarded by the educated classes. During the rains it is said that the villagers will not place a cot or husk rice outside the house, nor sweep their yards with an ordinary brush of palm-leaves, but only with one made from twigs. For they think that if they did any of these things the gods would see them and imagine that the cold weather had come and so the rain would stop. If the Kumhārs are prevented by the rain from drying their pots, they bury one in the ground and think that this will stop the rain. Hence, if there is a long break, the people sometimes think that this is brought about by the machinations of the potter and will go and break his pots. If a Baniā turns his grinding wheel from left to right instead of from right to left in the ordinary manner, a similarly injurious effect on the rainfall is believed to be occasioned. In order to bring rain the Gonds have a dance, holding sticks and beating them against each other. While grain is being measured after the harvest, the measuring pots and baskets are kept upside down, so that the evil spirits may not be able to get inside them and steal the grain while it is being measured. After threshing is over, a pig, a fowl or a cocoanut is offered to the field god as a thanksgiving. At the commencement of the rains the Bhumkā or priest of the village gods performs the ceremony of "Gāon bāndhnā", which protects the villages from epidemics, ghosts, tigers and cattle-disease. He collects contributions of from one to four annas each from the tenants, and makes an offering to the village gods of all kinds of food and clothing. Then at night accompanied by other Gonds he drives a pig round the boundary of the village, and afterwards sacrifices it and sprinkles some of its blood over all the village gods. The flesh is eaten by the Bhumkā and his friends. As he goes round the village he holds some grains of urad and

mustard seed in his hand. To avert cattle-disease the Bhumkā erects an arch of three poles to which mango-leaves are hung, and drives all the village cattle under it. The Bhumkā is often called in to pray over sick persons and he scatters the first handful of grain at sowing-time. If a man has small-pox in his house, he sometimes goes begging from door to door throughout the village, and then offers the proceeds of his tour to the goddess Devī, afterwards distributing them among the villagers. This is supposed to placate the goddess and cause her to remove the disease. *Gunias* and *sodhans* are male and female witches who are still feared to some extent. They may be of any caste but are usually Gonds. If they overlook a man while he is having his meal, he will be unable to digest it and will vomit it up. A *gunia* is said always to wear an iron bangle round the left wrist.

Festivals.

36. The ordinary festivals are observed. Mr. Chapman remarks :—'There is a curious survival 'of the old hook swinging among the 'people. It is carried out under the patronage of the deity 'called Megnāth, the son of Rāwan. The day after the Holī 'is the most efficacious date for the ceremony, but it is per-'formed also in October. The devotees, male and female, are 'swung seven times round a pole, to which they are 'suspended by a rope passed under the breast. The on-'lookers meanwhile shout "Hakhāri, Hakhāri." This cere-'mony is generally performed by childless people with the 'object of getting offspring. The attitude of suspension is, I 'believe, calculated to excite sexual sensations and thereby 'perhaps assists towards the attainment of this end.' The ceremony is, however, not solely performed for the purpose mentioned, but is also considered to influence the crops in some mysterious way. Usually the Bhumkā is swung round, this being part of his duties as village priest. 'The Holī is of course 'everywhere celebrated with great gusto and also the Muhar-'ram. In the month of October, the Ahīrs celebrate the

'Madai. Several villages club together for this festival and 'everyone takes part in it. The Ahīrs dance round a pole 'with head-dresses of peacock's feathers and necklaces of 'cowries. Special liquor licenses are given for each Madai 'and the occasion is always one of much merrymaking and 'a certain amount of license.' The Madai is celebrated on the day after the Diwāli. Various songs are sung during the dancing at the Madai, and the following translation of one of them, given to the writer in Seonī is not without poetical feeling, though it seems doubtful whether its composition can be attributed to the Ahīrs :—

'They promised to come, but they have never come; the thatch has fallen and the bamboos are cracked.

'Oh, green Diwāli! Oh, green Diwāli! We shall meet, we shall meet at Diwāli, and if we die our spirits will meet.'

'The geese will not stay though you throw pearls before them; they long for their own country.'

'When the woman went to the fields to scare off the birds, she fell asleep and the birds ate the grain.'

'My skin is cracked with age, but my heart is young. Oh, Youth, come back to me that I may enjoy life once more.'

'My eyes are so greedy for beauty, that they beg for it wherever they see it; how shall I restrain them[1].'

'Whenever you think that twenty-five and fifteen seers make up a maund, then think of me.'

On the night of the Diwāli the Ahīr stays up all night, and dances and sings in front of his cows and buffaloes, beating a drum to scare away the evil spirits. He dresses himself as a Rājput and takes a sword and shield in order to fight with the spirits. Afterwards he goes to his master and gets a present. The Holī is the principal occasion when *bhāng* or a drink made from the refuse of hemp-flowers mixed with water, sugar, cardamom and coriander, and *mājum* or sugar-cake mixed with hemp-flowers are consumed. The ashes of the Holī fire are preserved and used for various purposes

[1] This is a couplet attributed to Akbar.

such as averting the evil eye and the cure of scorpion bites. At Akhātīj or the beginning of the agricultural year in May, new earthen pots are worshipped and the people go out to the fields and offer balls of the pulse of urad or mūng to the field god. The *hom* or sacrificial fire is kindled, and the plough is driven three or five times round the field in the direction of the sun's course. After this agricultural operations may be begun. At Mahālakshmī, which falls in the month of Kunwār (September-October), the women make an image of an elephant in mud and worship it, by fasting and singing through the night. In the morning the image is thrown into a tank.

Muhammadans.

37. Muhammadans[1] number 12,000 persons of whom about 3000 live in the town of Seonī. They hold about 240 villages. The Diwān family of Seonī whose history forms part of that of the District are the leading Muhammadan landowners. Among the Muhammadans are a number of Fakīr-Sains or beggars, Manihārs or pedlars, Bahnās and Pinjārās or cotton-cleaners and Kunjrās or green-grocers. The Fakīrs may be distinguished from other beggars by their necklaces of onyx stone beads. Kunjrā women are well known for their obscene gestures and their quarrelsome and noisy disposition. The Pinjārās and Sīsgars have largely adopted Hindu customs and practices. At their marriages they first perform the *bhānwar* ceremony or walking round the sacred pole, and afterwards the Muhammadan rite of *nikāh* before the Kāzi. The *bhānwar* ceremony is often gone through in secret, so that the Kāzi may not know of it. They spread cowdung in their houses and often use Hindu names and methods of dress They also pay respect to the village deities. Many of them follow the Hindu law of succession, and in some cases it has been held that sisters and daughters are excluded from inheritance. But full proof of such a custom must always be

1 The following notice of Muhammadans is mainly taken from a paper by Mr. J. N. Sīl, Pleader, Seonī.

forthcoming [1]. The backslidings of the lower caste Muhammadans have given rise to the saying:—

'Acherā, Kacherā, Pinjārā
Muhammad se dūr dīn se nyārā.'

'The Kacherā and Pinjārā are lost to Muhammad and far from the faith.' But the adoption of Hindu practices is generally confined to those who live in villages, and in towns they conform to orthodox usage. There are a few Gond families in the District who have embraced Islām, in imitation of Bakht Buland of Deogarh.

Christians.

38 In 1901, Christians numbered 183 of whom 165 were natives, the number of native Christians having increased from 73 at the previous census. A Mission of the United Original Secession Church of Scotland was established at Seonī in 1871 and is at present managed by the Rev. John McNiel with the assistance of a European staff of three members and a number of native workers. The Mission maintains a High School at Seonī, for which a new and suitable building was under construction in 1905, two other schools at Seonī and a school at Chhapāra. It has also a dispensary for women and an orphanage at Seonī and owns a village. Seonī is in the Anglican Diocese of Nāgpur and is visited by a Chaplain from Kamptee. It is in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Nāgpur.

CASTE.

General notice of castes.

39. Gonds number 130,000 or 40 per cent of the population. They have lost many of their villages, but the important estates of Sarekhā and Dhūma belong to Gond landlords. Ahīrs number 31,000 or 10 per cent of the population, Ponwārs 16,000 or 5 per cent, Mālis 10,000 or 3 per cent, and the menial caste of Mehrās (weavers and labourers) 19,000 or 6 per cent. The principal landholding castes are Muhammadans, Kāyasths, Gonds, Brāhmans and Rājputs. Kurmīs,

[1] Phidābi Zaitanbi *vs.* Alā-ud-dīn, decided by Sir C. Crosthwaite in 1878.

Lodhis and Ponwār Rājputs are the important cultivating castes. The most considerable influx of Hindus from Northern India probably took place at the end of the seventeenth century under the rule of Bakht Buland the Deogarh Gond Prince, who encouraged Hindu and Muhammadan cultivators and workmen to come and settle in his dominions. But a certain amount of immigration must have occurred before this date.

Brāhmans and Baniās.

40. Brāhmans number 7000 or 2 per cent of the population and own 135 villages. The bulk of them belong to the Kanaujia subdivision and are immigrants from Northern India. They now, however, generally marry among themselves in Seonī. The Kanaujias are allowed to eat meat, but some of the older residents of the District have given it up. Brāhmans may drive the plough with their own hands in Seonī without being put out of caste, and some families have gone so far in their abandonment of ceremonial custom, as to observe mourning only for three days according to the local practice instead of for the orthodox period of ten days. Baniās number 3000 persons and hold nearly 100 villages. Most of them are recent immigrants from Bundelkhand. The Ponwārs and Charnāgars who are Jains by religion have constructed some fine temples in Seonī town, and have also a small library containing some rare and valuable Sanskrit works. Among the Agarwāl Baniās, when the wedding procession is about to start the Kumhār or potter brings his donkey and the bridegroom touches it with his foot, in place of riding on it as the custom formerly was. Some say that this is intended as a sort of humiliation to the bridegroom, because he is setting out to do a foolish thing, while others hold the custom to be in honour of Sitalā, the goddess of small-pox, who rides on a donkey.

Rājputs.

41. Rājputs, including Ponwārs and Bāgris, number 23,000 persons or 7 per cent of the population, and hold more than 200

villages. Practically all the Rājputs are of impure blood. They have generally adopted widow remarriage and say that this was first done on the occasion of a war with the Deogarh kingdom when many of their men were killed leaving young widows; and these had to be permitted to marry again for fear of their doing worse. The Baksariā Rājputs do not wear the sacred thread. Owing to this general abandonment of their *achār* or caste rules of conduct, the local Rājputs, with the exception of a very few families, are held to rank below Baniās. The Ponwār Rājputs, who account for two-thirds of the total number, may practically be considered as a separate caste. They reside mainly in the rice tracts of Ugli and Barghāt and marry among themselves, which a proper Rājput may not of course do. They are very old residents in the Waingangā rice country, where their skill in irrigation is well known. They have lived for long among the Gonds and in past times many of them have probably formed connections with Gond women, so that they will now take water from the hands of a Gond. They also show much skill in the management of Gonds as labourers, and through their agency the forests of the Waingangā tract were cleared, and the numerous irrigation tanks now existing constructed. They say that when they first immigrated to the Nāgpur country they married with Lād Baniās owing to the lack of Rājput women. They do not now wear the sacred thread. The Ponwārs take a price for their daughters at their marriage and for widows of full age a very high sum is paid. They take much pride in their bullocks, which are all brought out on the occasion of a marriage procession, and when near the bride's house the drivers race up to it. In appearance the Ponwārs are tall and fair with good features and their women are often decidedly handsome. When a funeral takes place they eat fried rice and sugar at the grave, which is peculiar as being contrary to the practice of other castes. Sterndale characterised the Ponwārs as 'An industrious and skilful 'race of cultivators, but a litigious, untrustworthy set, much

'given to removing, if they could, their neighbours' land-'marks, and delighting in the incessant law-suits arising 'therefrom'.[1] The Bāgris are another local subcaste of Rājputs of somewhat doubtful origin. They are immigrants from Mālwā and 'Derive their name from that large tract of 'country called Bāgar, or 'hedge of thorns,' the limits of 'Bāgar being distinctly marked by ridges of woody hills.'[2] Bāgris are more numerous in Seonī than in any other District of the Province. They say that they are really Baghel Rājputs, a claim unsupported by any tradition or evidence. Sir John Malcolm remarks of them[3] :—'Among the tribes 'settled in Central India who are professed robbers and 'thieves, the two principal are Bāgris and Moghīs, both 'Hindus of the lowest caste. The *Bāgris* are a very brave 'race of men and though they till the soil and follow occupa-'tions of industry from necessity, their favourite pursuits are 'thieving and plundering. In these arts they are at once 'expert and bold.' The Bāgris of Seonī, however, have settled down into peaceful cultivators and are esteemed to be fairly skilful. They occupy a higher position than the Ponwārs and wear the sacred thread. They will remove dead cattle with their own hands.

Kāyasths.

42. The Kāyasths (1300) are an important landholding caste in Seonī, having about 200 villages, of which half belong to the prominent family at present represented by Rai Bahādur Dādu Gulāb Singh. The ancestors of some of the Kāyasth families came from the United Provinces two or three centuries ago and, taking service under the Gond kings, succeeded owing to their ability and industry in becoming paymasters of the treasury and managers of estates. They continued to hold similar positions under the Muhammadan rulers and finally obtained a large number of villages in proprietary right from the British Government. The Kāyasths

[1] Seonī, page 8.
[2] Malcolm s Memoir of Central India, Vol. II, page 479.
[3] Ibidem, page 162.

of Seonī belong generally to the Sriwāstab and Saksenā subcastes.

Lodhīs, Kurmīs, Mālis and Ahīrs.

43. The Lodhīs number 5000 persons and possess 120 villages. They are principally found in the Lakhnādon tahsīl. Many of them are Mahālodhīs, and this subcaste, elsewhere considered as the lowest, takes rank in Seonī above all except the Mahdeles. They are excellent cultivators and like to embank their fields. Some of them aspire to rank as Rājputs and have prohibited the remarriage of widows, though the bulk of the caste allow it. They are often addressed as Thākur and use the Rājput term Singh after their names. They are fond of sport and are inclined to be quarrelsome, agrarian disputes being noticeably frequent in Lodhi villages. The Kurmīs (8000) are not such an important landowning caste as the Lodhīs, but they are also good agriculturists and of a peaceful disposition, while their women are industrious and of great assistance in cultivation. The most numerous subcaste in the Lakhnādon tahsīl are the Pardiyāns, who are so called because they take their meals in such seclusion as they are able to obtain. Theoretically they should not eat except in the *chaukā* or cooking place spread with cowdung for each meal, but this rule cannot be observed in practice. They appreciate the advantages of manure and make embankments for the eradication of *kāns* grass. They will not grow vegetables and only one subcaste, the Santorā Kurmīs, cultivate hemp, being despised on this account by the others. The Kurmīs of Seonī say that they were the original growers of sugarcane, and were first brought up from the lower world to introduce its cultivation upon earth. It is possible that they brought the cane into the District. The Mālis or Marārs, as they are called among the Marāthās, are chiefly occupied in raising vegetable and garden crops. They are good and laborious cultivators, but have little ability or aptitude for management and rarely acquire property. In Seonī the Bhor or Bhoyare

Mālis are the most numerous subcaste. They will not take food cooked with water from any other caste, and have abjured liquor and the flesh of unclean animals. They thus occupy a slightly more respectable position than the other subcastes. The Mālis also engage in personal service and do not object to cleaning the shoes of their employers. The Ahīrs are the most numerous caste in the District next to Gonds. In the south they are known by the Marāthā name of Gowāri. In the Kurai tract they are professional cattle-breeders, and elsewhere combine this occupation with agriculture. Not many of the caste are well-to-do, the largest Ahīr proprietor owning only eight villages.

Other castes.

44. The Kalārs hold about 90 villages and are also moneylenders and traders in a small way. The Dhīmars generally grow melons in the sandy stretches along the beds of rivers and act as personal servants. They keep pigs and donkeys, but notwithstanding their connection with these impure animals, Brāhmans will take water from them, and it is said locally that the Dhīmar's *kaunchā* or hand below the wrist is specially sanctified. So that whatever he does in his own home does not concern his employer and has no effect in conveying pollution. This convenient fiction has no doubt been devised because Dhīmars are commonly employed as household servants and to be unable to take water from their hands or allow them to clean vessels would be an intolerable inconvenience. The Rajbhars and Rajjhars are low castes, who were probably originally identical and are a Hinduised offshoot of the primitive Bhar tribe of the United Provinces, who in the Central Provinces are known as Bharias. In Seonī the Rajjhars are probably a mixed group formed of alliances between the Ahīrs and the Bhars and other forest tribes. They will take food from Ahīrs, who, it is said, will also eat with a Rajjhar, and like the Ahīrs they usually graze cattle. The Rajbhars claim to be Rājputs and state that their ancestors wore the sacred thread, but one of them while cutting a

bamboo broke his thread, and thereupon decided to dispense with it altogether. This pretension is of course quite unfounded.

Gonds.

45. The Gonds still own about 140 villages, though in proportion to their numerical strength and in view of the fact that a Gond dynasty formerly ruled in Seonī, this cannot be considered a very large estate. As elsewhere they have two main branches, the Rāj-Gonds or aristocracy, and the Dhur or 'dust' Gonds, the plebs. The Rāj-Gonds have adopted the religious and social observances of Hindus and wear the sacred thread. But Brāhmans will not take water from them and they retaliate by refusing to accept water or food from a Brāhman or from any caste except the Ponwār Rājputs, with whom they have a traditional intimacy. Even so, however, they will accept food only from a Ponwār man and not from a woman, and only when it has been cooked in a brass vessel. Burā Deo, the principal god of the Gonds, lives in a *sāj* tree, and this tree is also considered by them as sacred. The Gonds are usually very poor and their houses, clothes and furniture are of insignificant value. They till the poorer soils of the hilly tracts and grow the small millets, kodon and kutki. When they have a supply of food they prefer to stop in their houses and do no work. A local proverb says:—*Handia men anāj, Gond ke ghar rāj;* or 'A Gond considers himself as good as a king, so long as he has a pot of grain in his house'. For part of the year they live upon the fresh leaves of trees, the mahuā flower, and the roots and fruits which they find in the forests. The Gonds are much addicted to liquor and spend on it a large portion of their scanty earnings. Drink is an indispensable adjunct at all religious ceremonies, and at the celebration of births, weddings and funerals. They are usually honest in their dealings and on this account are in considerable request as farm-servants. During the winter they spend much of their time sitting or lying before wood-fires. In former days

they were notorious freebooters, and the ordinary term for a gang robbery was a Gondī; but they have now given up these wild habits. Colonel Thomson thus describes the Gonds:[1] 'Though very peculiar and timid with strangers, they are 'personally brave, honest in their dealings, proverbially 'truthful, and very tractable. Still they are unsettled in dis-'position, prone to wandering, and apparently void of attach-'ment for places. When well treated and trusted they make 'excellent servants for rough work; on the other hand, when 'they fall among bad characters, they are easily led away 'into joining plundering parties, which they seem to enjoy. 'Silent and suspicious at first, they are easily drawn out if 'their language is spoken; and they are particularly acces-'sible to a little cajolery. The stolidest old Gond in the 'field, or his still more stolid and eccentric partner who 'would under ordinary circumstances, if addressed as Gond, 'answer you with a shake of the head and a muttered 'Ahān' '(the word for 'no') will generally if addressed as 'Thākur' 'and 'Thakurāni' or 'Bhoi' 'Bhoin' give you some informa-'tion.' Sterndale[2] speaks of them incidentally as follows:— 'Happy, light-hearted Gonds, most of them, the girls especial-'ly, with a bright bunch of *palās*[3] flowers or the sweet scented 'sprays of *tinsā*[4] stuck on one side of their heads. Such is the 'fondness of the Gond for this style of decoration, that, 'when some years ago oats were introduced into the District 'and distributed among the mālguzārs for experiment, the 'Gonds were so struck with the peculiarly graceful grain 'that it was with difficulty that they were restrained from 'plucking it to adorn their turbans. The stalwart Gond 'damsels, with their sturdy bare limbs tattooed with elabor-'ate patterns, strode Amazon-like along the road after their 'less athletic-looking lords. One of the first things that 'strikes a stranger on entering Gondwāna is the muscular

[1] Settlement Report (1867) page 40.
[2] Seonī, page 29.
[3] Butea frondosa.
[4] Ougeinia dalbergioides.

'power exhibited by the females of the aboriginal tribes as 'compared with the men, a state of things to be paralleled in 'the animal kingdom only by the hawks.' The Pardhāns, or Pānals as they are called among themselves, are the musicians and bards of the Gonds; they are really a part of the tribe, but the ordinary Gond looks down on them and will not accept food from their hands.

Low castes.

46. The impure menial and labouring castes are the Mehrās, Katias and Chamārs, and these usually weave coarse country cloth and serve as village watchmen, while a large number have taken to agriculture, and so successfully that no less than twenty villages are now owned by Mehrā proprietors. The Katias are another low caste of cotton-spinners as their name denotes, *kātna* being the term commonly used for spinning. They call themselves Renhtā Rājputs or Rājputs of the spinning wheel. As cotton-spinning is practically extinct many Katias have become petty traders, and four villages are owned by the caste. Like the other low castes they are great drunkards and when they go to inter their dead, take liquor with them for consumption at the burial ground. The Chamārs work in leather and make shoes and the leather articles required for agriculture. Many of them are labourers, but they are not usually employed as farm-servants, as they cannot be permitted to enter the house. They receive the hides of dead cattle and are reported to be addicted to the crime of cattle-poisoning for the sake of the hides. If a Chamār woman is detected in a misdemeanour with a man of the caste, both parties are taken to the bank of a tank or river where their heads are shaved in the presence of the caste *panchāyat*. They are then made to bathe, and the shoes of all the assembled Chamārs are made up into two bundles and placed on their heads, while they are required to promise that they will not repeat the offence. After the additional penalty of a feast to the caste-fellows, they are readmitted to social intercourse. The Seonī Chamārs

worship the castor-oil plant. Other low castes commonly considered as impure are the Basors or bamboo-workers, the Kuchbandhias or brush-makers, and the Māngs or drummers. Dhobis and Kumhārs generally occupy a slightly higher position, but the Gadherā Kumhārs or those who use donkeys to carry their wares are generally held to convey pollution by their touch. The Pardhān Gonds are also commonly regarded as impure. Among the low castes of Seonī caste penalties are easily incurred. If a man touches his shoe with his hand and says to one of them 'I have beaten you,' the person so addressed is considered as temporarily out of caste. But if he immediately goes and informs his caste fellows he is reinstated with a nominal fine of grain worth one or two pice. If, however, he goes back to his house and takes food and the incident is subsequently discovered, a penalty of a goat is levied. This rule, however, does not apply when a man is beaten by a Government servant; no penalty is levied in such cases as the 'Sarkāri shoe' is not held to convey contamination. There are no important classes of criminals. The Gonds and Pardhāns are addicted to thefts of cattle, and this reputation is also borne by the Golars, a Telugu caste of graziers of whom a small number are found in the District. Among migratory castes the Banjārās and Jogīs have a bad reputation; the former steal cattle and the Jogīs practise various impostures by adopting the disguise of religious mendicants, using sleight of hand to induce a belief in their magical powers, and telling fortunes. The Chamārs, as already stated, are said to poison cattle for the sake of the hides.

SOCIAL LIFE AND CUSTOMS.

Description of village life.

47. The following interesting description of village life has been furnished by Mr. R. B. Chapman, Deputy Commissioner of Seonī:—'The substratum of society in every 'Seonī village is the Gond. He is essentially a hewer of wood

'and drawer of water and as such is seen to the best advantage 'in wild and unclaimed portions of the District where his axe 'can have free play and the fruits of his labour have not excited 'the cupidity of clever and grasping neighbours. The Gond, 'if he can, will always build his village in the form of one 'long street running from east to west. He has many pre-'judices as to which side of the street he will reside upon. 'In forest tracts, many villages are inhabited solely by 'Gonds. In such places their houses are a most primitive 'affair, the walls often consisting only of unwattled daub. 'Their villages are, however, always neat and clean. A 'wooden plough-share may often be seen at the entrance by 'way of tutelary god and a ring of roughly carved posts 'painted with vermilion at a short distance from the village 'marks the last resting-place of the dead. The Gond sets 'much store by the produce of his *bāri* or small garden 'enclosure at the back of his house, where he raises maize, 'beans and juār. Many of the principal mālguzārs and 'tenants in the Seonī tahsīl and the Chhapāra tract of the 'Lakhnādon tahsīl are Muhammadans, who established them-'selves here under the auspices of the Muhammadan Dīwāns 'of Chhapāra. In the north of the District we find Rājputs 'and Lodhīs who immigrated from Bundelkhand, and in the rice 'tracts of the west Ponwārs and Marārs who with Kāchhis 'excel in garden cultivation. A number of Jain Baniās from 'Merwāra are settled all over the District. The lower castes 'as Gonds, Pardhāns, Mehrās and Pankās generally live 'together in the Gond *pāra* or quarter. The Ahirs are 'graziers and cattle-breeders and also deal in *ghī*; the young 'male buffaloes are bought up by Mukerīs and driven down 'in large herds to Chhattīsgarh where they are used for 'ploughing. The Ahīr uses little milk himself except in the 'form of *dahī* or curds. The Mehrās and Pankās weave 'coarse country cloth and are the class from which the 'kotwār is generally recruited. Almost all the inhabitants 'of the Gond *pāra* keep goats, pigs and fowls, but except the

'Ahīrs very few have cattle. At the time of the cutting of 'the wheat harvest there is always a great movement among 'the labouring classes. Like the hop-pickers at home, whole 'families will travel long distances to places where plenty of 'harvesting is going on. Leather work is generally done by 'Gonds and not Chamārs. Many villages have a Gārpagāri 'or hail-averter and rain-compeller. The doctrine of chance 'makes his profession one of many successes and few blanks. 'Dhīmars and Kahārs are in request for carrying the palan-'quins and litters which are *de rigueur* at wedding ceremo-'nies, and have their regular *haqs* or dues on these occasions. 'Medicine is not the prerogative of any particular class. 'The Baniā is often something of a druggist and a reputed 'Baigā may have a practice in sorcery and potions extending 'over a considerable area. There is also a curious class 'of travelling practitioners called Singhīwālās. Their main 'business is cupping with the horn, but they treat disease 'in general, and even carry out cataract operations in a 'rough fashion to the indignation of the Civil Surgeon. 'Nagarchis and Chamārs supply the village fife and drum 'bands without which no domestic ceremony is complete.'

Description of village life—(continued.)

48. 'In Hindu villages the Brāhman Pujāri is of course 'a great person. He is invited by all 'Hindus claiming a reputation for piety 'to hold meetings in their houses, at 'which the sacred books are sung and recited. When a 'Pujāri from another village visits him, the villagers are 'invited to his house to profit by his ministrations. Brāhman 'beggars make a living by going round from house to house 'with invocations, blessings and *mantras*. The number of 'beggars who have to be satisfied is innumerable. Wander-'ing *sādhus*, Bairāgis, Bhāts (professional story tellers) and 'parties of pilgrims to the Nerbudda or Purī, all levy their 'toll; other casual visitors to the village are Bhartarīs or 'travelling ministrels who sing to the accompaniment of drum 'and *sitār;* the Siklīgar who grinds the knives and sickles;

'the Pārdhi who traps quail, partridge and black-buck for 'the mālguzār; Nats who dance and walk on the tight rope, 'and Bāzīgars or professional jugglers. Baluchis also travel 'from village to village selling knives and ornaments and 'Kābulis come yearly from Afghānistān and perambulate the 'country, lending money or selling cloth on usurious credit. 'There is no doubt that pilgrimage plays a great part in the 'life of the village folk. Parties of pilgrims continually 'leave their villages and travel by rail or road to distant 'shrines. They come back with stories of what they have 'seen and heard. These pilgrimages infuse a healthy cir-'culation into the otherwise stagnant pool of village life. 'The railway lately introduced into the District has enabled 'the people to go much further afield on these pilgrimages 'and I have met large and delighted parties returning from 'Benāres and Allahābād. The villagers of the Seonī Dis-'trict have the inestimable benefit of ample pasturage and 'plenty of wood and timber. The cowdung cake is seldom 'resorted to for fuel. The people can practically take as 'much wood as they want for fuel from the mālguzāri jungle 'and have only to ask the mālguzārs' permission in order to 'cut timber for building. Where mālguzāri forest is insuffi-'cient there is ample Government forest in every direction 'and the system under which whole villages can commute 'for grazing and *nistār*[1] in Government forest is one which 'contributes much to the well-being of the people. Mill-'woven cloth is now sold at all the large bazars and is 'supplanting the indigenous article. Grain markets are 'being established all along the line of railway. The 'management of the grain markets is one which inti-'mately concerns the villager. At present the grain is 'all measured in measures of capacity, and the ignorant 'seller is at the mercy of crafty buyers both in the 'matter of price and the measure. All these bazars are be-

[1] The amount of timber and fuel necessary for household use.

'ing brought under the management of the District Council 'and weighing and commission agency put upon a proper 'footing. Almost every mālguzār now owns a pony, besides 'a *chhakrā* and pair of trotting bullocks, and this may be said 'of many of the wealthier tenants too. The District Council 'has set a good example in improving the water-supply and 'there are now few villages without a good stone well. Many 'of the best villages are situated along the banks of the Wain-'gangā, which follows a long circuitous course through the 'District. The two large fairs at Chhapāra and Mundāra 'provide the people with many articles which are not locally 'produced. The Seonī villager is most hospitably and 'socially inclined. Families are continually interchanging 'visits and this habit undoubtedly supplies the railway with 'a large part of its passenger traffic. Every domestic 'event is made the occasion of a large family or caste feast 'to which guests are invited from long distances. The 'social obligations demanded by caste are very clear 'and well defined. To fail in any of them is to call 'down the wrath of the caste *panchāyat* and the penalty of a 'caste feast. Very speedy retribution awaits the man or 'woman who does not conduct his or her life according to 'what the caste *panchāyat* considers fitting, and thus the 'bonds of society are kept fast riveted.

Houses and furniture.

49. 'It is the ambition of every mālguzār to have a 'large, double-storied, whitewashed 'house with a flat roof by preference, 'from which his family can enjoy the prospect and eat the 'air.' In the Havelī tract there is no very marked difference between the houses of tenants and mālguzārs. But in the rice-growing area or Ponwāri tract, as it is locally called, the mālguzārs have good houses, often with separate buildings for bathing, cooking, living, keeping their cattle and entertaining guests. Timber is more plentiful here, and the sandy qualities of the earth make mud walls more easy of construction than in the black-soil tracts. Separate sheds for

grain are usually constructed in front of the dwelling-house so as to be always under the master's eye. Sometimes receptacles for grain are built in the shape of a regular room (*bandā*) supported on arches with a hole in the side large enough to admit a man and divided into two or three compartments for different kinds of grain. On the Lakhnādon plateau the houses and the general aspect of the villages are poorer than elsewhere. A tenant's house will be divided into two rooms; large tenants will have a separate shed (*kondā*) for cattle, but small tenants will keep them in one of the rooms. Most cultivators have a little garden behind the house in which they grow maize, chillies, tobacco or vegetables. The furniture consists of a sleeping-cot for each member of the family when this can be afforded, some low wooden stools with seats made from hemp or *moyā* grass (*Saccharum ciliare*), stone and earthen grinding mills, a mortar of wood or stone for pounding rice, one or two earthen cooking-places, some bamboo baskets, some earthen saucers to serve as lamps, and the cooking and eating vessels of the family.

Food and clothes.

50. *Chapātis* of wheat, pulse, vegetables, *ghī* and milk are the staple food of the better classes and *chapātis* of juār and kodon and kutkī boiled in water of the poorer ones. 'The Gond's great household stand-by' says Mr. Chapman 'is *pej* or the water 'in which rice or kodon has been boiled. He takes this at 'all times as the Scotch do porridge, and it is extraordinary 'what staying-power it seems to give him.' The well-to-do classes eat twice, those who cultivate with their own hands twice or three times, and the Gonds sometimes four times a day. The Gond does not eat salt with his meals, but takes a few chillies and a little salt after them. His vegetables consist of the young leaves of the pīpal, the *rusallā* (*Cordia myxa*), the *keolār* (*Bauhinia racemosa*), the little *chakorā* weed (*Cassia tora*) and the tender shoots of gram, which he is allowed by custom to pluck from his master's field for nothing.

Mushrooms and the soft young shoots of bamboos also figure in his diet. Country beans and tomatoes are other vegetables often grown in gardens. The oil of *jagnī* is mixed with vegetables for cooking. Among the delicacies consumed at festivals and offered to guests are wheat cakes fried in *ghī*, curds and gram-flour boiled with chillies, salt, turmeric and coriander and rice. All men smoke, home-grown tobacco being principally consumed. Opium is given to children until they are three or four years old to keep them quiet. Betel-leaf is only obtainable in the large villages, and the ordinary cultivator eats areca nuts alone. Men usually wear white clothes, and coats with buttons are being adopted in place of the old *angarkhā* and *bandī* tied with strings over the breast. Landowners wear cotton trousers for full dress. Most cultivators have a handkerchief of coloured country cloth, which they carry over the shoulder or round the waist, and in which they tie up money, tobacco and any other small articles they require with them. During winter they have coats of *banāt* or rough serge. A small piece of red cloth, called *angochhā* serves as the common head-dress. Women wear a *lahengā* or skirt drawn up between the legs behind, with a shoulder-cloth and an *angia* or breast-cloth, tied with strings at the back, and patched with pieces of coloured cloth to make it look attractive. Others have the long cloth going round the waist and over the shoulders known as *dhutia* or *sāri*. These are often black or bluish-black, and less frequently red or blue. Gond women formerly wore white clothes, but have recently adopted coloured ones in imitation of their Hindu sisters. Shoes are of two kinds called *nokdār* and *mundā*, the former having pointed toes. The better classes in towns wear shoes imported from Calcutta and Delhi. Women have *tariās* or sandals open round the instep. Only the highest castes bathe every day and the others once or twice a week. Hot water is often used for bathing in the winter. The Gond is said to bathe three times a year, at the Polā, Diwāli and Hareli festivals, and if he washes on

other occasions his friends say that he will fall ill as he has become a *pan-dubbī* or water-bird. Indian soap is now to be purchased at the important bazars, but in the interior the people use wood-ashes for cleaning themselves. The custom of wearing beards was formerly prevalent among old men, but it is now going out even among Muhammadans. The men wear their hair in towns, but in the country the cultivators often shave the whole head except the scalp-lock. Rājputs formerly wore long locks of hair hanging on each side of the face like the love-locks of the Cavaliers.

Marriage customs.

51. The marriage ceremony follows the customary ritual of the Northern Districts. Among many castes the practice of *Antā-Sānta* or the exchanging of brides between two families is in vogue. Before the betrothal the boy's father goes to the girl's house and makes her a present of a *batkī* or brass dish containing a few rupees, and some betel-leaf and fruit. This is called *hatonā* and is a customary gift among all except the highest castes. Among the Parwār Baniās and the low castes like Katias and Mehrās, women accompany the marriage procession and all the ceremonies are performed at the bride's house, but the women of other castes stay at home. The Koshtīs, it is said, perform all their marriages on the day of Akhātīj in Asārh, the commencement of the agricultural year. The Marārs are said to have a curious custom at marriages, all the women of the bridegroom's party being shut up in a separate house at night with the bride's sister's husband or other relation. He may then attempt anything he likes with them, but they beat and pummel him about, so that he is often glad to retire after a short period Well-to-do persons hire dancing girls to perform at their weddings. The dancing-girls are usually Muhammadans but various Hindu castes are also represented in the profession. When the wedding procession starts for home, turmeric is sprinkled over the bride and bridegroom before their departure, like rice in England. The remarriage

of widows is permitted among all castes except Brāhmans, Baniās, Kāyasths and the better class of Rājputs. The Ponwārs receive large sums for their daughters when married a second time if they are young, and it is said that a Ponwār mother's parting speech to her daughter when first married is 'May you come back soon' that is as a widow. A Gond bride is carried on her brother-in-law's back round to the houses of her friends before her marriage and is made to cry with each of them, while they give her a present of a little money. The bridegroom's party goes to fetch the girl and take her back to his house, where the ceremony is performed. When this is about to take place the bride hides in some other house and the bridegroom's brother-in-law searches for her, while the women of the party sing and the bride shouts out 'coo'. As she enters the bridegroom's house two spears are planted before the door to make an arch, and the bridegroom pushes her through these from behind, the girl hanging back. The bridegroom's brother-in-law is the water-carrier and must supply water to all the guests, in return for which he gets a double share of food. While he is doing this business, his younger sister-in-law, if he has one, follows him about and beats him to make him work more quickly. On the day after the wedding the bride and bridegroom throw mud at each other and roll one another about in the mud for sport.

LEADING FAMILIES.

General. Muhammadan families.

52. The most important landholding castes are Muhammadans and Kāyasths. The Muhammadans once owned about half the District, but have lost a considerable part of their estate. The Kāyasths came from the United Provinces and, taking service under the Gond kings, obtained the management of large estates through their ability and industry and subsequently became recorded as proprietors. The Muhammadans now have about 250 and the Kāyasths

more than 200 villages. Other important landowning castes are the Gonds, Lodhīs, Brāhmans, Rājputs, Baniās and Kalārs. The leading Muhammadan family is that of the Dīwāns of Seonī whose history has been recorded with that of the District. The family are at present in possession of the Gondī tāluka or estate of 89 villages near Barghāt in the south-east of the District, held on a favourably small quit-rent of Rs. 1000 annually. The quit-rent tenure expires with the death of the present holder. They have also about 25 other villages, of which two are revenue-free. The present representative Muhammad Alī Khān[1] is about fifty years old and is heavily involved in debt to the Allahābād Bank ; he has four sons, none of whom have been very well educated. Muhammad Alī Khān is the first Darbāri in the District, and when he visits the Deputy Commissioner has the customary right to receive *pān-supāri* or betel-leaf. The Muhammadan family of Kedārpur in the Lakhnādon tahsīl hold 70 odd villages, but the estate has been divided among nine or ten members. They are a branch of the Dīwān family. The estate was formerly held on a quit-rent tenure, but this lapsed in 1884 and it was then assessed at full rates. Most of the shareholders are indebted and some of their villages have been sold. The estate called the Bibī Jāgīr is held by a branch of the Deogarh Gond dynasty of Chhindwāra, which was converted to Islām in Bakht Buland's time This family received from the Marāthās the Adegaon estate on a quit-rent, but on their failing to pay this regularly it was resumed, and the seven villages which they now have were given to them free of revenue. The present representatives are two widows without direct heirs. On their death the revenue-free grant will lapse and the estate will pass to two nephews on a fourth of the full assessment. Other leading Muhammadan mālguzārs are Zakaria Khān of Badalpur and Khān Sāhib Abdul Rahmān Khān of Ashtā. The father of the

[1] This gentleman died in 1906, and was succeeded by his son Dīwān Shujāat Alī Khān

latter gentleman is mentioned in Sterndale's Seonī as having dammed up a gorge in one of the Darāsi hills and made a fine tank to remove the then existing scarcity of water.[1]

Kāyasth, Gond and Lodhī families

53. Of the Kāyasths Rai Bahādur Dādu Gulāb Singh is the leading representative and owns the Darāsi tāluka or estate of 84 villages in the south of the District. His ancestor, Phūl Shāh, came from the Rae Barelī District of the United Provinces about the beginning of the eighteenth century, and was appointed Bakshī or pay-master to the army of Bakht Buland of Deogarh. He subsequently served in the same capacity under the Mandlā Rājā and obtained a grant of the estates of Bachai and Bhanwargarh, but these were confiscated on the annexation of Mandlā by the Marāthā governor of Saugor. His son obtained employment from the Dīwān of Seonī, and was granted the Darāsi estate by the British Government in 1822. Rai Bahādur Dādu Gulāb Singh received a present of Rs. 500 from the British Government for building a *sarai* and obtained his title for services in the famine of 1897. His estate is well managed and his sons have received a good education. Dādu Bakhtāwar Singh of Seonī is the head of another old Kāyasth family. He is a Saksenā Kāyasth and owns eight villages, while he also makes advances of money. The most prominent Gond landowner is Thākur Latkan Singh of Dhūma in the north of the District. His ancestors are said to have reclaimed the tract from the forest and to have obtained a Chaurāsi or grant of 84 villages, but a certain number have been sold in payment of debt and Latkan Singh owns about 50. A considerable part of his revenue is derived from the valuable timber on his estate. Thākur Bahādur Singh, the Gond mālguzār of Sarekhā and Ugli in the east of the District, owns about 18 villages. His family is an old one and he has received some education and manages his own affairs. Of the Lodhis the proprietors of Kahāni belong to a family which

[1] Ed. 1887, page 163.

has been settled in the District for more than two hundred years. Their estate consists of nearly 40 villages and is divided between two cousins, both of whom are indebted, though they are not without capacity for managing their property. One of them, Jawāhir Singh, has been awarded the title of Sardār for his services in the famine of 1897. The family are usually known in Seonī as the Gomāshtas of Kahāni. The Lodhī mālguzārs of Lakhnādon own 22 villages, this being not much more than half of their former estate. The property was for some time under the management of the Court of Wards for liquidation of debt. Ganpat Singh, one of the representatives of the family, killed the well-known Adegaon man-eating tiger of Seonī.

Brāhman, Baniā and other families.

54. Of the Brāhman mālguzārs, Jīwan Lāl, Sanādhya Brāhman, of Bakhāri, and Rūpchand, Kanaujia Brāhman, of Mungwāni are the most prominent. Jīwan Lāl owns 22 villages and is very well off, and Rūpchand besides possessing 20 villages has extensive moneylending transactions. His estate has been acquired by his father and himself. Rai Bahādur Lāla Onkārdās of Seonī is the most important Baniā mālguzār. He owns about 27 villages. including Bamorī or Belgaon on the Bālāghāt road. The family are Agarwāl Baniās and their estate has been acquired through loan transactions in the last fifty years. Several Parwār Baniās living in Seonī town have a number of villages. Thākur Madan Singh of Pahāri near Ghansor, is a Jāt proprietor, having an estate of about 25 villages, which his family has held from the time of the Nāgpur Rājās. His ancestors served in the army of the Bhonslas and bred horses for their cavalry. Khot Singh of Khamaria is a Gūjar mālguzār with an estate of nearly 20 villages. His family is an old one and he has built a fine tank in Khamaria. Of the Ponwār Rājputs the mālguzār of Mohbarrā who owns the Uglī estate of 12 villages is the most prominent. The District has a Mehrā landowner, Brij Lāl Pāndia of Chhapāra, who has 12 villages;

this is perhaps the largest estate held by a mālguzār of the despised Mehrā caste in the Province. Brij Lāl has recently died and his successors continue to live in Chhapāra.

CHAPTER IV.

AGRICULTURE.

SOILS.

Description of soils.

55. As usual on the Sātpurā plateau good black soil is found only in low-lying land at the bottom of valleys, while the levels and lower slopes are covered with a friable brown loam and the higher slopes and summits of hills with a shallow loam or the reddish gravel mixed with large stones known as *barrā*. In the east of the District, the sandy soil formed from the detritus of metamorphic or crystalline rock occurs. This is called *sehrā* in Seonī and, though of poor natural fertility, produces excellent crops of rice with the assistance of manure and irrigation. In the classification of the last settlement (1894—96) the following soils were distinguished. *Kāli* denotes a black or dark-brown clay soil of great depth. It is distinguished from *morand* by being less friable and heavier bulk for bulk, and it also cracks to a greater extent. It corresponds to the rich black alluvial soil of the Nerbudda valley. The District contains none of the very best soil of this class and what exists was entered as *kāli* II, the area even of this being inconsiderable and amounting only to one per cent of the total under cultivation. This soil is of great fertility, growing the best sugarcane and producing good crops of wheat year after year without manure and without rotation. *Morand* is a friable loam varying in colour from black to brown. It often contains a considerable admixture of black stones or sand and everywhere a certain proportion of limestone nodules. It is better suited for wheat than gram and masūr and if irrigated will carry sugarcane. *Morand* II is distinguished from *morand* I by want of depth, lightness of colour and a larger proportion of stones, sand and lime. The two classes cover practically half the cultivated area. *Mut-*

barrā is a term applied to black or brown soil when either very shallow or much mixed with gravel or sand. Spring crops can be grown on the best class of this land with the assistance of rain in the cold weather. It covers 16 per cent of the cultivated area. *Barrā* is a reddish-coloured gravel thickly strewn with large stones. But sometimes it is almost free of stones and at others full of large yellow flints. This soil will grow juār and til in rotation with the minor millets and *jagnī*, but it is easily exhausted and requires frequent fallows. It is sometimes left fallow for as long as five years, but three years' cropping and three years' rest is a fair average. It covers 26 per cent of the cultivated area. *Sehrā* is the yellow sandy soil well suited for rice when it obtains a sufficient supply of water. It covers 9 per cent of the cultivated area. There are also a few hundred acres of *kachhār* or land situated on or below the banks of a river or stream, which receives a deposit of rich sediment from being flooded during the rains. Land was further classified according as it was capable of growing wheat, rice or only minor crops, while the small area of vegetable or garden land was placed in a fourth category.

Position-classes and nature of land.

56. About 350,000 acres or more than 40 per cent of the cultivated area were classed as capable of growing wheat, nearly 100,000 or about 11 per cent as bearing rice, and 370,000 or 45 per cent as suitable only for minor crops. Garden lands, both irrigated and dry, occupied nearly 15,000 acres or about 2 per cent of the whole area. Wheat and rice land were further classified according to various advantages and disadvantages of position. In the case of wheat the positions recognised were :—*tagar*, if the field was a poor one lying high on a slope; *bharkīla*, if it was cut up by water-channels and ravines; *ujarhā*, if it was liable to damage from wild animals; *bandhia*, if it was embanked with a small bank; *bandhān*, if it was embanked with a large bank; *abpāshi*, if it was irrigated; and *māmūli*, if it

fell into none of the above classes. Of the whole wheat area, 63 per cent was classed as *māmūli*, 33 per cent as *tagar*, 1 per cent as *bharkīla* and 3 per cent as embanked. In the case of rice land the positions recognised were:—*tikrā* if the field was high-lying and gave a very poor crop in a year of scanty rainfall; *samān* if it was flat and retained its own drainage; *jhilān* if it lay low and thus received an extra supply of water from the drainage of the slopes; and *abpāshi* if it was irrigated. Of the rice area only 6 per cent was classed as *jhilān*, 10 per cent as *tikrā*, 52 per cent as *samān* or level and 32 per cent as falling under irrigation. Distinctions of position were not recognised in the case of minor crop land with one exception; this was the *geunrā* position, applied to fields lying near the village site and being manured by its drainage. Such fields were always shown as *geunrā*, to whatever class of land they might belong.

Soil-factors.

57. For the purposes of the soil-unit system an arbitrary numerical factor of 32 was adopted for wheat land of *kābar* II soil in the ordinary position and other soils received a factor smaller or larger according to their relative value. The differences of position were also allowed for by adding or deducting a percentage on the factor. The full statement of factors for each kind of soil in the different positions may be found on page 38 of Khān Bahādur Aulād Husain's Settlement Report and it is unnecessary to reproduce it here. The leading features are as follows: land in the Lakhnādon tahsīl was always rated slightly lower than in the Seonī tahsīl; the *tagar* or high-lying position reduces the value of wheat land by 20 per cent and the embanked position raises it by 30 per cent; rice is not grown on *kābar* land, and the *samān* or level position of *morand* soil in the case of rice is equal to wheat land of *kābar* soil in the ordinary position. Irrigated rice fields were considered about 20 per cent more valuable than embanked wheat fields in the case of good soil. Minor

crop land of the same soil is about two-thirds as valuable as wheat land. Fields in the *geunrā* position were rated 25 per cent higher than those in the ordinary position in the case of the best soils and 50 to 100 per cent in that of the poorer soils. Fields liable to damage by wild animals were rated 33 per cent lower than others in all cases.

STATISTICS OF CULTIVATION.

Proportion of area occupied.

58. Of the total area[1] of the District in 1904-05, 827 square miles or 25 per cent were included in Government forests, 218 square miles or 6 per cent were classed as not available for cultivation, and 767 square miles or 23 per cent as culturable waste other than fallow; the remaining area amounting to 1545 square miles or 989,000 acres, and forming 46 per cent of the total, or 61 per cent of the village area excluding Government forest, was occupied for cultivation. At settlement (1894—96) the occupied area formed 58 per cent of the total, but the settlement statistics excluded the ryotwāri area which is not altogether inconsiderable. If this be added to the settlement figure the increase since settlement is 81,000 acres. In the Seonī Havelī the occupied area was 79 per cent of the total available at settlement, and in other groups it exceeded 60 per cent. On the other hand in the Kurai, Nerbudda, Uglī and Sāgar groups it was under 50 per cent, being only 28 per cent in Kurai. In several groups the increase in cultivation between the 30 years' settlement and last settlement was 70 per cent or more, being 50 per cent for the District as a whole. The largest expansion of cultivation during the period between the settlements took place in the hilly tracts on the frontiers as Kedārpur, Kurai, and the area known as the *kathār* lying north and south of the Seonī Havelī. The Settlement Officer did not anticipate any further considerable extension of cultivation.

[1] The figures of area taken in this section are those obtained from the cadastral survey: and they exceed the area of the professional survey by 160 square miles.

He remarked:—'In groups which are made up of black soil, 'cultivation has reached its highest pitch, and the same is the 'case with the rice growing tracts of Kurai, Seonī, Barghāt 'and Uglī. In some of the villages of these groups there are 'no proper grazing or even standing grounds for cattle. The 'increase in the Lakhnādon tahsīl since settlement is larger 'than that in the Seonī tahsīl, but cultivation has in Lakhnā-'don been extended mainly to the poorer soils which require 'long resting fallows, and it is therefore not nearly so valu-'able or substantial as in Seonī.'

Fallows.

59. In 1904-05 nearly 260,000 acres or 26 per cent of the occupied area consisted of new and old fallow. Taking the figures of 1893-94 for purposes of comparison, as including the ryotwāri area and also as representing about the highest pitch of prosperity to which the District had attained before the cycle of bad years, the fallow land has increased from 20 to 26 per cent of the total. The increase is entirely under old fallow which now forms 10 instead of 5 per cent of the occupied area, while the proportion of new fallow remains the same. There is nothing remarkable in the increase, which merely demonstrates that a certain amount of land which went out of cultivation during the famines has not yet been reclaimed. The proportion of fallow must probably always be about 20 per cent of the total in Seonī, as so much of the cultivated land is of the poorest quality and requires frequent and lengthy rests.

Double crops.

60. The gross cropped area was 750,000 acres in 1904-05, of which 18,000 acres were double-cropped. The maximum area recorded as bearing two crops was 36,000 acres in 1893-94, and this figure has not been approached in recent years. The bulk of the after-crops are probably raised in the rice tracts, where it is a common practice to sow linseed, or one of the pulses in irrigated rice fields after the rice has been cut. The pulse most generally raised is *lākhorī*, the small variety of

tiurā. This is sown in the field while water is standing in it after the rice has been cut, while linseed is scattered broadcast over the field while the rice is still standing, this method being the one properly known as 'utera.' For gram the field must be ploughed up after the rice has been cut. In the few cases when wheat fields are embanked, a catch crop of rice is sometimes taken during the rains, when water is standing in the fields. The decline in the double-cropped area may be attributed to the evil fortune which has lately attended the rice crop, and the poor circumstances of the cultivators in the parts where it is grown.

Progress of cropping.

61. The net cropped area was 732,000 acres in 1904-05, showing an increase of 6000 acres since 1893-94. The position in which the District stood before the bad years has thus been a little more than regained. In 1905-06 the cropped area was 754,000 acres. At settlement the cropped area was only 652,000 acres excluding ryotwāri villages, or 80,000 acres less than in 1904-05. During the period of the 30 years' settlement the cropped area increased by 20 per cent, the acreage of rice, juār, masūr (lentil) and the oilseeds til and *jagnī* having expanded very largely. Wheat showed an apparent large decline but this was due to attestation having taken place in a very unfavourable year in the Lakhnādon tahsīl, and in 1893-94 the wheat area was only 3000 acres smaller than at the 30 years' settlement,[1] the figures of which also probably include wheat and its mixtures in the statistics. As compared with the settlement statistics which, as already explained, were taken in an unfavourable year, the cropping of 1904-05 shows a greatly increased value, there being an addition of about 76,000 acres to the wheat area. In this year autumn crops covered 53 per cent and spring crops 47 per cent of the cropped area as compared with 44 and 56 per cent respectively in 1893-94. The position of the harvests has thus

[1] The acreage was 273,000 in 1893-94 as against 276,000 at the 30 years settlement.

practically been reversed, but the decrease in the spring crops is largely under linseed and tiurā, which are not of very great importance.

Statistics of crops.

62. In 1904-05 wheat occupied 262,000 acres or 35 per cent of the cropped area, kodon-kutkī 136,000 or 18 per cent, rice 78,000 or 10 per cent, gram 48,000 or 6 per cent, til 29,000 or 4 per cent and *jagnī* 30,000 or 4 per cent. The figures of the same crops for 1893-94 were wheat 273,000 acres or 36 per cent of the cropped area, kodon-kutkī 124,000 or 16 per cent, rice 104,000 or 14 per cent, gram 41,000 or 5 per cent, til 19,000 or 2½ per cent and *jagnī* 32,000 or 4 per cent.

CROPS.

Wheat.—Varieties.

63. Wheat is the most important crop in the District covering about a third or more of the total area in normal years. The area under it fell in 1896-97 to 125,000 acres and amounted to 262,000 acres in 1904-05. It is principally grown in the Seonī Havelī and next to this in the Keolāri and Ghansor tracts of the Seonī tahsīl. The soft white wheat called *pissī* is principally grown for export. Two varieties are locally known as *pissī*, one with long awns called *shikarhai*, and another beardless wheat called *mundī*. This latter is said to be the most rust resistant of all varieties. Other varieties distinguished locally are *kathia*, a large red bearded wheat, which natives consider to be the most easily digested as a food; *jalāliyā*, a yellow wheat which is sown as a delicacy; another variety called *misrī*, which is said locally to have been imported from Egypt; this is sown in small quantities as a delicacy by landowners but is said to require manure and to be hard to thresh and grind; and *māhujā*, a yellow wheat which ripens earlier than the other varieties and derives its name from the fact that it is cut in the month of Māgh (January-February). *Pissī* however is now most raised both for export and for local consumption.

Methods of cultivation.

64. Land intended for wheat is treated with the *bakhar* once or twice in the hot weather, twice again in the rains by good cultivators and again just before the seed is sown. The *hal* or regular plough is not generally used in preparation of the land, the reason given being that it forms the earth into clods, and the seed is thus subsequently prevented from germinating; but the real reason may be that the soil is so heavy and sticky that the plough cannot be driven through it in the rains by the class of cattle commonly used. Embankments are rarely made, probably because the surface is too uneven and the friable *morand* soil does not settle down into a strong bank. Small embankments are built to prevent erosion, but fields embanked on all sides as in the Jubbulpore Havelī are very rarely found. Occasionally embanked fields are made above rice land so that the water can be let out of the field for the irrigation of the rice crop, and wheat be subsequently sown in the damp ground. Sowing is generally started in the beginning of October after the September rain known as *hāthi kā pāni*, and lasts for a month or more; but the time varies with the character of the monsoon and it may begin in the middle of September, or last till the middle of November, while in embanked fields it may be postponed till the end of November. The plough is used for sowing and is fitted with a hollow bamboo with a small bowl at the top, into which the seed is fed, generally by a woman; the seed trickles down the bamboo and falls into the furrow just behind the ploughshare. A maximum of $1\frac{1}{4}$ acres can be sown in a day but the average is half or three-quarters of an acre. Wheat is not weeded, but it is often watched at night for a month before harvest to keep out cattle and guard against thieves. Fields near forest or near a road must be watched with more care. Sometimes *karar*, a thorny plant either resembling or identical with *kusum* (*Carthamus tinctorius*), is sown on the borders of wheat fields to keep out cattle. Wheat land is not as a rule manured, and green soiling with *san*-hemp is but rarely

practised; the Hindu prejudice against this crop having hitherto prevented much use being made of it, though its value is recognised. As regards the effects of rain on the standing crops the Settlement Officer says:—'November 'rain is not wanted unless the fall of the two previous 'months has been deficient, and even then it often does as 'much damage to the ripening autumn crops as it does good to 'the seedlings of the *rabi*. If following a rainy October it 'may be disastrous and lay the foundation for rust. Exces- 'sive and untimely rain during the cold weather is very 'injurious, but the showers of December and January are 'considered as a heaven-sent blessing. February rain is of 'little avail, if previous drought has prevailed and if the 'preceding months have been very rainy it may do consider- 'able damage. But if the crop is late it may do good. March 'rain is nearly always injurious.'[1] Rotation is understood and practised to a limited extent, the usual custom being to sow gram, tiurā and masūr in place of wheat, but there is no recognised order. In Ghansor wheat alternates with these pulses and also with the spring crops, juār and cotton. The harvest begins towards the end of February and lasts into April, March being the regular month of harvest. Threshing (*gāhnī*) is carried out through bullocks, and for this and also for winnowing (*urāoni*) no hired labour is usually necessary. The cutting of the crop is commonly estimated to cost 5 per cent of the produce. Winnowing needs a wind of fair strength, and cannot be done either on calm or very windy days. The business of threshing and winnowing is usually completed about the middle of May. The seed sown to an acre of wheat is stated to be 112 lbs, though this is perhaps rather a high figure. It probably includes the contributions to village servants made at sowing time, and in the neighbouring District of Betūl with similar soil and methods of cultivation the quantity of seed required is given as 80 to 100 lbs. The standard outturn is 620 lbs. an acre, while the

[1]Settlement Report, 1900, p. 9.

Settlement Officer places the crop in embanked fields of *kābar* soil at 780 lbs. an acre.

Diseases and pests.

65. [1] The chief disease to which wheat is liable is rust. Three different fungi cause this disease, and are known as *Puccinia graminis* black rust, *Puccinia glumarum* yellow rust, and *Puccinia triticina* or orange rust. The yellow and black rusts are generally found in Seonī. Rust is caused by excessive rain during the early stages of the crop. When the plants are attacked by this disease the ears do not fill out properly and the grain is light and poor. Other diseases are smut caused by the fungus *Ustilago tritici*, and mildew caused by the fungus *Erysiphe graminis*, but these are rarely found in the District and the damage caused by them is inconsiderable. Wheat is liable to the attacks of four pests : (1) the surface weevil (*Tanymecus indicus*), (2) Termites (*Termes taprobanus*), (3) the wheat stem-borer (*Nonagria uniformis*), (4) the wheat aphis (*Siphonophon*). The surface weevil feeds on the young shoots as they come out of the ground and may destroy the whole crop and make fresh sowings necessary. Termites attack the roots and thus destroy the crop. They are never numerous enough to destroy the crop over a whole field, but here and there bleached faded plants can be seen and the loss inflicted is occasionally considerable. The stem-borer is a caterpillar which attacks and destroys the main stem. If the grain is forming the loss is considerable, but if the plant is young it will throw out side shoots. The green aphis feeds on the leaves and when the ear forms attacks it and sucks out the juice of the grain. The damage done by all these pests varies greatly from year to year. Termites are generally found year after year, but the injury from other pests is often inconsiderable and depends generally on climatic conditions.

[1] This paragraph is reproduced from the chapter on Agriculture in the Betūl District Gazetteer by Mr L. E. P. Gaskin.

66. The second crop in importance consists of the small millets kodon and kutkī which have covered between 16 and 20 per cent of the cropped area in different years. The largest area recorded under them was 153,000 acres in 1894-95, and the smallest 116,000 in 1897-98. They are the staple food of the Gonds, as well as of the poorest classes of Hindus and are sown even by landowners and tenants in good circumstances for the purpose of paying the wages of labourers in grain. Two varieties of kodon are locally distinguished, *bhadelī* or light and *sairā* or heavy. The first is sown at the break of the rains and cut about the end of September and the second is sown in August and cut in November or December. Land intended for kodon is treated with the *bakhar* once in the hot weather and once after the first rain; the seed is then sown broadcast and the *bakhar* dragged again over the field to cover it in. New land is ploughed twice with the *hal* in the rains before the year of sowing and kodon is often sown as the first crop. It is also a common practice with poor land to sow kodon for two years and then leave the field waste for two years for grazing purposes, or *jagnī* followed by kodon may be sown and then kutkī for two years, after which a two years' fallow is given. Kodon is practically immune from disease, but if the rainfall is insufficient the crop is destroyed, and the natives call this *dudhia* or *pantusrā*, though whether they refer to the effects of a disease or the attack of a pest is not certain. The people think that if a bear goes through a kodon field, the crop acquires intoxicating properties, perhaps because the bear is so fond of mahuā; and believe that if a tiger goes through the field the plants will be strengthened and bear plentifully, by acquiring from the tiger an infusion of his leading characteristic. Kutkī (*Panicum psilopodium*) is not so much grown as kodon. Two varieties are distinguished with light and dark-coloured seeds, of which the former is more common, and the crop is also grown early

Kodon-kutki.

and late like kodon; the early crop is called *bhadelī* as it is sown in the month of Bhādon and the late one *katakahī* as being cut in Kārtik, or *osai* because it comes with the dew. The early kutkī gives the better crop. Kutkī is not so exhausting to the soil as kodon and can be sown continuously or with infrequent fallows. It is subject to the attacks of a black insect with red wings shaped like a wasp, which is locally known as the *ghorī* or horse-fly. It is said to attack the plants before the grain has formed but not afterwards. About a *kuro* or 14 lbs of both grains is sown in an acre and the standard outturn of kodon is 400 lbs., yielding 200 lbs. of cleaned produce.

Rice.

67. Rice (*Oryza sativa*) is an important crop in the Uglī and Barghāt tracts of the east of the Seoni tahsīl, which really form part of the transplanted rice country of the Waingangā valley, and it is also grown in the Kurai tract and in the *kathār* area to the south of the Havelī. Elsewhere only rice of a coarse quality is grown for home consumption, and it is frequently found in *geunrā* fields near the site of the village. The largest area under the crop was 104,000 acres in 1893-94 and the smallest 41,000 in 1899-1900. It covers from 10 to 15 per cent of the cropped area. The varieties of rice are very numerous. *Chinnur* is one of the best kinds of table rice. *Halad gundī* or 'yellow button,' *ambāgohī* or 'shaped like a mango' and *pisso* or wheat-shaped are the names of other varieties of which the meaning is known. Out of nearly 105,000[1] acres recorded under the crop at settlement more than four-fifths was transplanted rice, but in recent years both the area grown in this manner and its proportion to the total acreage of the crop have greatly declined. When the crop is to be transplanted (*ropā*) the plants are first sown thickly in small plots or nurseries, called *khār*, which are heavily manured. When sufficient

[1] The attestation records of the settlement refer to two years, and the area under rice was higher than that recorded in any single year.

rain has fallen the rice fields are ploughed into a state of liquid mud, with a sort of harrow (*datrī*) and after about a month of growth in the nurseries the young plants are taken up and dabbed into this mud with a stick or with the finger. Sometimes if the field is soft enough they may be simply thrown into it. Transplanted rice requires a favourable rainfall in August and September and a considerable proportion of it is irrigated. Weeding is not needed. The cost of transplantation is heavy as the process is intensely laborious, but the outturn is largely increased in good land.[1] Rice sown broadcast (*boār*) is ploughed up when a few inches high and the *datrī* or harrow is then dragged over the field upside down to press in the plants again. By this means most of the weeds are killed and the field does not as a rule require weeding afterwards Water must be standing in the field when the plants are ploughed up. This process is not usually carried out in fields of black soil, perhaps owing to the difficulty of ploughing, and here the crop is simply weeded. The seed sown for rice is locally stated to be one *khandī* (320 lbs.) in 2½ acres or the same as for wheat; while the Settlement Report gives the seed as 120 lbs. and the outturn as 1200 lbs. or ten-fold. The crop is sometimes attacked by a caterpillar and in a dry year the plants are destroyed when coming into ear by the grasshoppers known as *phāpha* (*Heroglyfus furcifer*).

Gram.

68. The pulse gram (*Cicer arietinum*) is the fourth crop in importance, its acreage having varied from 20,000 to 50,000 acres. It has become more popular in recent years. Two varieties are known, the red or *lāl* and the white or *parbatia*, the latter having a white and the former a bluish-red flower. *Parbatia* is generally sown in the rice tracts and *lāl* elsewhere. A third variety called *chanī* with a small grain is said to be sown occasionally. Land is prepared for gram

[1] A more detailed description of the process of transplantation will be found in the Bālāghāt District Gazetteer.

in the same way as for wheat and the seed may be sown broadcast or through a sowing-tube. Broadcast gram is called *chharrā*. The broadcast crop is earlier than the other, which is sown at the same time as wheat and cut about 15 days before it. When the young plants come up their tops are plucked off and this is said to make them spread and bear more fruit. The leaves make a favourite vegetable. Occasionally a sheet is spread over the crop at night and wrung out in the morning and the liquid obtained is taken as a medicine. Gram is sown both singly and as a mixture with wheat or linseed and also as a second crop in black-soil fields. When sown with linseed the proportion is 30 per cent of this crop to 70 of gram. The seed required for an acre of gram is 70 lbs. and the standard outturn 600 lbs. The crop is very liable to damage from frost and fog and in wet or cloudy weather a caterpillar called *illī* appears and causes great havoc.

Other spring crops.

69. Tiurā (*Lathyrus sativus*) is another cold weather pulse covering from 12,000 to 30,000 acres or 2 to 4 per cent of the cropped area. The acreage under it has declined in recent years. There are two varieties of the pulse of which the one with a larger seed called tiurā or *lākh* is sown as a cold weather crop, while the smaller called *lākhorī* is grown as a second crop in irrigated rice fields. Both plants have a bluish flower and except in the size of the grain no difference has been detected in their characters, but *lākhorī* has none of the injurious effects in causing paralysis, which have been produced by the excessive use of tiurā as a food grain in famine years. The seed sown to an acre of tiurā and the outturn are said locally to be about the same as for gram, but the Settlement Report puts the outturn of *lākhorī* sown as a second crop at 300 lbs. The pulse masūr (*Ervum lens*) occupies about the same area as tiurā. It is grown in the cold weather and requires a heavy soil retaining moisture and a more careful tilth than gram. About 90 lbs. of seed are sown to the acre

and the standard outturn is 640 lbs. *Batrā* or peas (*Pisum arvense*) are grown on a few thousand acres.

Oilseeds.

70. The oilseeds til, *jagnī* and linseed occupy together nearly 70,000 acres, or about 9 per cent of the cropped area. In recent years the popularity of linseed has largely declined, as it suffered severely during the wet seasons of 1892 to 1894. About 24 lbs. of seed are required to the acre and the standard outturn is 250 lbs. Til (*Sesamum indicum*) has three varieties with white, red and black seeds They all have white flowers. The white-seeded variety is sown at the beginning of the rains and the other two in August. The first crop is cut in September and the second in November. The oil of tilseed is exported and is also used locally for food and for rubbing on the body. It is scarcely used at all for eating. *Jagnī* (*Guizotia oleifera*) is sown between June and August and the crop is ready after a period of two or three months. It is often sown in land overgrown with weeds in the belief that it causes them to disappear. Both til and *jagnī* are sown in the poorer kinds of soil and are sometimes grown mixed with kodon, juār and cotton. Only from 2 to 4 lbs. of each oilseed are required to sow an acre and the standard outturn is 150 lbs.

Juār.

71. Juār (*Sorghum vulgare*) covers from 12,000 to 40,000 acres, the area under it having largely increased since 1893. Several varieties are locally distinguished. The seed is usually sown broadcast, but in the south of the Seonī tahs l the *tifan* or three-coultered sowing drill of the Nāgpur country has been introduced. A two-coultered drill is also used which is called *dube*. Occasionally it is also sown with the *bakhar* to which a bamboo tube is attached. Juār isfrequently sown mixed with several other crops as arhar (*Cajanus indicus*), urad (*Phaseolus radiatus*), mūng (*Phaseolus mungo*), kodon and cotton. The seed is sown at the beginning of July and the crop is ready for cutting by the end of December. It is

generally weeded once. The stalks are cut off near the top or half way down and not at the root as in the Nāgpur country, much of their value for fodder being thus lost.

Cotton.

72. The area under cotton (*Gossypium herbaceum*) has increased from 6000 acres in 1893-94 to 15,000 in 1904-05. It is principally grown in the tract round Chhapāra and Bakhāri and also in the south near Kurai. The variety locally grown is called *tinteria* and is believed to be a kind of *jarī*. Cotton is often sown in fields whose fertility is increased by proximity to the village site or in low-lying land, but it is not usually manured in Seonī. It is sown broadcast and is often mixed with arhar, til and juār. Another crop which has recently become important is *san*-hemp (*Crotalaria juncea*) and the objection which members of the good castes formerly entertained to sowing it is fast disappearing. In 1904-05 it covered 15,000 acres, having increased from 5000 acres in 1893-94. *San* is often grown on *kachhār* land along the banks of rivers and also in gardens. It is sown in the beginning of the rains and cut in November or December. The seed is sown very thick so that the plants may stand close together and be prevented from branching out, as this spoils the yield of fibre. The process of beating out the fibre is very expensive and is said to cost a fifth of the produce, though this may be an exaggeration. The seeds are fed to cattle. Mr. Chapman remarks:—'It is 'surprising that hemp is not sown even more than it is. 'The explanation is I think that a good supply of water 'is essential for cleaning the hemp for market. The pro-'cess of working the hemp renders the water unfit for 'other purposes and thus the production of hemp is res-'tricted to those places which have a superabundant water-'supply.'

Sugarcane.

73. The area under sugarcane declined from 850 acre in 1893-94 to 460 in 1904-05. Five varieties of the grain are said to be grown in the District. *Pondā* is the English or white cane, having a smooth yellow stalk with nodes at long intervals. It gives the best sugar but is more difficult to cultivate and is peculiarly subject to the attacks of wild animals. The *pachrang*, so called because it is variegated in shades of red and yellow, is the cane most generally grown. The cane plot is furrowed into numerous small channels along which water is run, and the seed, which consists of small pieces of cane containing each three or four eyes, is then sown in the channel, the sower pressing his foot on to each piece as he drops it so as to partially bury it. Manure and constant irrigation in the dry season are required. The standard outturn is 1200 lbs. of *gur* or unrefined sugar per acre.

Minor crops.

74. Of minor crops the small millets *sawān* (*Panicum frumentaceum*) and *kangni* (*Setaria italica*) covered 18,000 and 9000 acres respectively in 1904-05. Condiments and spices, chillies, coriander, garlic and onions are principally grown. The fibre *ambāri* (*Hibiscus cannabinus*) was grown on 130 acres in 1904-05. Groves and orchards cover about 850 acres, nearly all of which consists of mangoes, as practically no other fruits are grown. Of vegetables, brinjals (*Solanum melongenum*) occupy 130 acres, *kakrī* (*Cucumis sativus*) 600 acres, and sweet potato (*Batatas edulis*) 100 acres. Melons are grown on the sandy stretches exposed in the beds of rivers. In December or January the Dhīmars prepare the plot by removing the surface sand, and the wet soil is then made up into *boārs* or beds and plentifully manured. The seeds are put in lukewarm water for a night and next morning are tied up in the leaves of castor and exposed to the sun. After this they are covered with grain for some days, during which they germinate. They are sown in January or February and

the plots are frequently manured during the period of growth, the manure being put in at the roots, while the surface of the plot is covered with sand. The outturn of a plot of half an acre is 600 or 700 melons and the cost of cultivation about Rs. 50.

Agricultural implements.

75. The common plough called *hal* or *nāgar*, consists of three pieces, the *hal* or upright, the *chahu* or wooden socket of the share and the *muthia* or handle. The iron share is called *phār*. A lighter plough is used in the rice tracts. The sowing plough is made by fixing a bamboo tube (*por*), with a bowl (*chari*) at the top into the wooden socket The *tifan* or three-pronged sowing drill of the Nāgpur country has been introduced into the south of the District. Improved methods of cultivating juār and cotton by sowing in straight lines, between which harrows drawn by bullocks can be pulled for weeding the fields, are gradually finding their way into the District from Nāgpur. There is no doubt that this method saves much labour in weeding and ensures nourishment to the roots by turning moist soil over them. The *kini* is a sort of cart without wheels in which the rice seedlings are placed for transplantation, and it is dragged by buffaloes over the rice embankments. The *datāri* is a beam of wood studded with nails used for breaking up the clods and preparing the fields for transplanted rice. A small narrow spade called *kātha* is employed for making embankments in rice fields. The *ghorā* is a sort of wooden stand for the foot, about twelve inches high; the man who pulls up the rice seedlings from the nursery uses a pair of these to prevent his feet from being continually immersed in the water. When it rains the cultivator places a *moria* or leaf umbrella without a handle on his head so that it rests there without being held and goes on working.

Manure.

76. As a rule manure is collected only during the four wet months and in the open season is made into cowdung cakes. It is kept in

shallow open pits and the sweepings and refuse of the house are added to it. No use is made of liquid manure or of the silt of tanks. The nurseries for transplanted rice must be heavily manured, three cart-loads being spread on a plot of about a twentieth of an acre. In the spring crop area the manure is used for the maize gardens and occasionally for juār and cotton but very rarely for wheat.

IRRIGATION.

Irrigation.

77. The largest irrigated area was 32,000 acres or 5 per cent of the total in 1891-92, while in 1899-1900 it fell to 2500 acres, and in 1904-05 was 10,500. The District contains about 600 irrigation tanks and about 500 durable and 1000 temporary wells. The area watered from wells is usually less than 1000 acres and consists of sugarcane and vegetables. Rice is irrigated from tanks in the rice tracts of Uglī and Barghāt. Regular irrigation tanks are provided with rough sluices at the sides, and frequently also in the centre to draw off the deep water below the embankment. The sluice often consists of the hollow trunk of a tree imbedded in the earth, sometimes two placed one above the other, while for large tanks channels of brick are made. The opening towards the tank is stopped with a clay pot filled with earth or a curtain of hemp fibre. Small tanks called *gātiyās* are also made by running an embankment across a slope with rice fields lying beneath it. The water collects behind the bank and is let out into the rice fields in September or October and wheat is then sown in the moist bed of the tank. It is proposed to bring the whole of the Uglī tract under a system of irrigation from three large tanks which are to be constructed at Rūmal, Katangā and Borghondā. Embankments for wheat fields have hitherto been very rare, but in the last few years, a few of the best agriculturists have begun to construct them. At settlement only 3000 acres of land were provided with regular embankments on all sides or *bandhāns*, and 6000 more

had small embankments or *bandhias* built along the lower end of the field to prevent erosion. The highest proportion of fully embanked fields is found in the villages along the Nerbudda. The reason why they are not often made elsewhere is probably that the surface is too uneven and the friable *morand* soil does not settle down into a strong bank. The people say that the earth is like *gobar* or cowdung.

CATTLE.

Breeds and prices.

78. The best cattle are bred in the Kurai and Khawāsa tracts below the Sātpurā plateau. These are of the Gaolao breed of Wardhā and the herds are in charge of professional Gaolīs; the village of Pātan may be mentioned as containing a large number of stock. Special bulls are kept for breeding and changed every three or four years. The Gaolao cattle are white with short horns, broad convex foreheads, short ears and large and soft eyes. They have full chests and fairly developed forearms and their tails are long, thin and tapering. The calves bred in Kurai fetch Rs. 30 a head at the age of 18 months. The stock reared on the plateau are poor animals of mixed breed and are known by the generic name of Gondī. They have long horns, short ears and narrow foreheads. In the villages round Adegaon cattle of a grey colour resembling those of Saugor are raised. And there are also a number of animals belonging to the Raigarh breed, which probably come from Jubbulpore and Mandlā. On the plateau bulls are not usually set apart for breeding, but if a cultivator has a good animal he may keep him for a year before castrating him and get some calves from him. Light-coloured hoofs are considered a bad mark in a bullock as they are with a pony, while dark knees and horns and a dark-coloured line under the body are held to indicate a good animal. A local saying is:—

Bail bisāwan jaiye kanth
Bhūre ke nā dekho dant.

Kāli gānth ko kajlā līje
Chār dām adhik dedīje.

Which is rendered: "Oh husband, when you go to purchase a bullock, if his hoofs are white, don't look at his teeth, but if his knees are black you can pay four rupees more for him."

Bullocks are castrated in the second or third year, the operation being usually performed by Gonds In their fourth year they are trained to cultivation. The working life of a pair of bullocks is said to be ten years, except in the Havelī tract where owing to the severe labour of cultivation in the heavy black soil and the lack of grazing they last only for five or six years. The price of a pair of Gaolao bullocks is about Rs. 150 and of Gondī bullocks about Rs. 50.

Grazing and food.

79. The herds from the Kurai tract are sent to the forests of Mandlā and Bālāghāt for the hot weather, but elsewhere the cattle only go to the nearest Government forest. Often they are not sent at all if the forest is too distant to permit of their return the same night. The favourable grazing rates recently introduced for the stock of local cultivators have resulted in an increased resort to the forests for grazing purposes. As a rule even plough bullocks only get wheat and rice straw when grazing is not available, while in the busy season they are given 2 lbs. of tiurā per head daily if the cultivator can afford it. A day's feed for a pair of bullocks is 80 bundles of grass or straw and 16 lbs. of chaff and double this amount may be given during the working season. The Ponwārs feed their cattle on the water in which rice has been boiled, and the leavings of food from the household, collecting the food in wooden troughs for them. Sometimes they boil down pigs' fat and give it for food as well as using it as an embrocation for the limbs. A feed of salt is usually given once a month during the rains to plough bullocks, the allowance being from 4 to 8 oz. a head. Landowners may give it also at the Diwāli festival. Other cattle usually only

get salt once a year during the rains, when it is strewn on the grass for them. Those who cannot afford salt sometimes feed the straw on which horses have been bedded to their cattle.

Statistics of cattle.

80. In 1904-05 the District contained 132,000 bulls and bullocks or a pair to every 13 acres in cultivation. During the four years up to 1905 the numbers of stock rose steadily, from 84,000 in 1901. The number of cows in the District in the same year was 120,000, giving about 70 to each inhabited village or two to each household, a very high average. In villages near forest the proprietors keep large numbers of cows and substantial tenants may have ten or a dozen apiece, but where there is no forest within easy distance the numbers are much smaller. The price of a cow on the plateau averages about Rs. 15 and in the Kurai tract Rs. 30. The Gonds and a few poor Muhammadans use barren cows for cultivation.

Buffaloes.

81. Buffaloes are principally bred in the Kanhiwāra circle by Gaolīs and Kirārs, who keep large herds for the purpose of manufacturing *ghī*. In the rice tracts they are used for cultivation as they work well in the mud and slush of the fields and are stronger than cattle. But they are of little or no value in dry weather and hence even the rice cultivator cannot rely entirely or mainly on buffaloes. In the Havelī tract buffaloes are sometimes employed for ploughing up fields overgrown with *kāns* grass. The price of a male buffalo is about Rs. 20 and of a cow from Rs. 50 to Rs 80 according to the amount of milk given. In 1904-05 there were 11,000 male and 30,000 cow buffaloes in the District.

Small stock.

82. Practically no sheep are bred, but goats are kept both by the Gadarias or shepherds and by ordinary cultivators. Large flocks of goats are also driven through the District from Bundelkhand to the south. These animals are known as Bengāla *bakrī* and are black, while those bred in Seonī may be black

or white, or speckled. Small ponies are bred and are used for riding, especially in the Haveli, where carts cannot travel during the rains off the metalled roads. Petty traders keep ponies for carrying their goods about to the village markets. A few landowners also keep small mares for breeding. In 1904-05 there were 6000 horses and ponies in the District.

Cattle-disease.

83. The largest mortality among cattle is at the commencement of the rains when they eat the young rank grass in large quantities after a long period of under-feeding. From February onwards the animals do not get sufficient sustenance to keep them in good condition and their enfeebled frames succumb readily in the rains precisely as the people themselves do in time of famine. The local saying is:—*Mare mure Māgh ke, de Asārhé khor*, or 'The bullock is really killed in Māgh but Asārh gets the blame.' Foot-and-mouth disease (*khurī*) and rinderpest (*māta*) are the commonest ailments of cattle. The former is only fatal when occurring in a virulent form. The local treatment is to apply charcoal and *nīm* leaves or *dikāmāli*, the gum of *Gardenia lucida* boiled in sweet oil, to the feet and to make the animal stand in mud, while the mouth is washed with a solution of alum or a mixture of salt turmeric and *ghī*. If maggots get into the wounds a powder is applied made from the leaves of the custard apple tree (*Anona squamosa*) In this case the animal may be laid up for six months, but if the disease is properly treated it may be cured in a month or less. No regular treatment exists for rinderpest beyond giving the animal cooling food. Calves suffer much from attacks of itch. Buffalo calves especially are very delicate, and their lives are not considered to be secured until they have got into their third year, the local saying being that when a buffalo has seen the lamps of three Diwālis it may be expected to live. A veterinary dispensary has been established at Seonī for three years, and about 1200 animals were treated at it in 1904-05.

Fairs.

84. A large cattle fair is held annually at Chhapāra, to which numbers of old and worn-out animals are brought for sale to the butchers. A weekly cattle market is held at Barghāt and a few animals are sold in the Bhaironganj market at Seonī. Cultivators from the north of the District often go to the Pindrai market in Mandlā to purchase cattle, and also to Chhindwāra. The young stock of the Gaolao breed from Kurai and Khawāsa are taken to Kamptee for sale.

CHAPTER V.

LOANS, PRICES, WAGES, MANUFACTURES, TRADE AND COMMUNICATIONS.

LOANS.

Land Improvement and Agriculturists' Loans.

85. There is as a rule little demand for Land Improvement loans in the District; and except during the famines the amount advanced has not on an average exceeded Rs. 1500 a year. In 1897 about Rs. 20,000 were given out in loans, mainly to mālguzārs in the Kurai tract and the rice country round Uglī and Barghāt. In 1900 loans were not as a rule given and the construction and repair of tanks were undertaken either as small relief-works under the Civil Department or by means of grants to mālguzārs. From the passing of the Land Improvement Loans Act in 1883 up to 1904-05 about Rs. 60,000 were advanced in all, of which Rs. 48,000 were recovered and Rs. 5000 remitted, a balance of nearly Rs. 7000 being outstanding. Nearly Rs. 8000 were recovered in interest. No *sanads* for agricultural improvements were so far as is known given prior to 1899, and from that year up to 1905, fifteen were distributed; of these eleven were given for embankments and other works in fields, three for the excavation of wells and one for the improvement of a tank. The fact that more certificates have not been given for tank work is somewhat surprising. Transactions under the Agriculturists' Loans Act were similarly on a very small scale until 1896 when about Rs. 23,000 were given out in consequence of the failure of crops. During the subsequent famine years advances were made on a large scale, more than a lakh being distributed in 1900. During the last two years up to 1905 the amount advanced has again fallen to Rs. 4000. The total amount of

loans made under the Act between 1883 and 1905 was Rs. 3·30 lakhs, of which Rs. 2·85 lakhs were recovered and Rs. 35,000 remitted, leaving about Rs. 10,000 outstanding. A sum of Rs. 19,000 was recovered on account of interest. The result of the transactions under both Acts is thus that Government has been repaid nearly the whole of the principal sum advanced but has received no interest, the amount actually recovered on this account being somewhat less than the principal written off. There can be no doubt however that the loans have materially contributed to save many cultivators from financial ruin and have kept much land under cultivation which would otherwise now be waste.

Rates of interest on private loans.

86. The rate of interest on private loans is from 6 to 12 per cent in the case of large sums of Rs. 1000 or more and on good security. Occasionally the rate of interest may now be lowered to 3 or 4 per cent, during the currency of a loan if the security is unimpeachable. Tenants in ordinary circumstances have usually to pay 24 per cent for cash loans. In the case of loans for seed grain the average rate is 25 per cent for the spring and 50 per cent for the autumn crops. Advances of grain for food while the crops are in the ground are called *khawai*. The autumn grains and especially kodon and kutkī are usually borrowed in this manner and the interest charged is 50 per cent. On this subject the Settlement Officer wrote as follows [1] :—

'A number of Hindu ryots and with few exceptions the 'Gonds sow their own seed, but a great many cultivators 'depend solely upon borrowing for this purpose. This per-'nicious system of borrowing undoubtedly tells heavily upon 'the resources of poor tenants who find it almost impossible 'to remain out of debt. There are however some tenants 'who, though they are in a position to sow their own seed, 'yet to please their landlord, or to keep up their connection 'with the moneylender, generally borrow. Gond ryots,

[1] Settlement Report, 1900, para. 36.

'with but few exceptions, reserve their own seed for the 'kodon and kutkī crops and borrow any other seed that they 'may sow.' The credit of the tenants stood at a low ebb during the period of agricultural depression, and the practice of *lāwanī* or selling the crop before harvest sprang up. In such transactions the loan made in cash has to be repaid in grain at a low value rate after harvest and the contract always redounds to the advantage of the lender, who may reap a profit of about 50 per cent. Cotton, til, wheat and *san*-hemp are the crops sold in this way, and it is a favourite method with the Parwār Baniās especially in the Dhanorā, Kedārpur, Chhapāra and Mungwāni tracts.

Moneylenders.

87. The moneylenders of the District belong principally to two classes, the Parwār and Mārwāri Baniās ; to these must be added a few Kāyasths who have made extraordinary headway during the last decade. The Deputy Commissioner wrote as follows of the moneylending class in 1902:—'The methods of the 'moneylending class have undergone no change; usurious 'contracts are as common as ever they were; exorbitant rates 'of interest are the general rule. It must be admitted how-'ever that creditors have felt the pinch of the cycle of bad 'years to a greater or less degree according to their own 'wealth. Petty moneylenders in rural areas have sometimes 'gone to the wall altogether; their richer brethren in towns 'have suffered also and have had to wait for a return on 'their capital; but the wealthy banker has come out of these 'times, perhaps scalded, but with power unimpaired. In this 'connection the question presents itself whether the money-'lending class hankers after landed property. An analysis 'of the transfers effected by the courts tends to show that 'this class is not now genuinely eager for land. Excepting 'a few individuals who are both bankers and mālguzārs on a 'large scale, and excepting also a few more who occasionally 'purchase a village at a cheap price from a spirit of specula-'tion, *mahājans* as a body do not consider landed property

'a good investment, and look upon the administration of such 'property, often at a distance from their place of business, 'as a somewhat unprofitable burden. They acquire land 'rather from necessity as the sole security for their 'debts than from deliberate choice.' The majority of the leading moneylenders reside in Seonī and are generally Parwār Baniās. Among them may be mentioned Seth Pūran Sāo Parwār Baniā, the wealthiest banker of the District, who owns about 15 villages; Rai Bahādur Lālā Onkār Dās an Agarwāl Baniā, who is an Honorary Magistrate and owns 27 villages; Seth Srīrām Sāo, Parwār Baniā; Lālā Murlīdhar Khazānchi a Dhūsar Baniā, who was formerly Treasurer of the District; while there are several other Parwār Baniās with a considerable capital. The leading moneylenders of other castes are Bhopat Rao Marāthā of Seonī, who owns seven villages; Dādu Bakhtāwar Singh, Saksenā Kāyasth of Seonī, owning eight villages; Rūpchand, Kanaujia Brāhman of Mungwāni who has an estate of twenty villages; and Khet Singh, Gūjar of Khamaria in the Lakhnādon tahsil who also has some twenty villages. The leading moneylender in Chhapāra is Gulāb Chand, a Parwār Baniā.

Transfers of villages.

88. During the currency of the 30 years' settlement the number of mahāls transferred by sale or foreclosure was 263 or 18 per cent of the total number of 1484 in the District held in mālguzāri right. In the Seonī tahsīl the proportion was 23 per cent, and in the Lakhnādon tahsīl 13. The amount of property transferred was slightly less than in other Districts during the same period. The Settlement Officer pointed out that the transfers of estates were in no way due to the incidence of the land-revenue demand, as not a single village had been sold for arrears or taken under Government management. The value of landed property went up enormously during this period, and there was little outlet for the increasing capital of the District except in loans on land. The consequence was

that proprietors were able to obtain sums on loan amounting in some cases to so large a multiple of the annual income from their property that this would barely suffice to pay the interest of the debt. The multiple of the land revenue which was paid on transfers went up in some instances to an extraordinary figure. In recent years transfers have naturally been much more frequent, as proprietors who with favourable seasons could have extricated themselves were unable to withstand the losses of the famines. Between 1898 and 1905 a total of 115 whole villages and 539 shares were transferred. If the shares be counted up by annas a total of some 215 whole villages is obtained or more than a seventh of the total number in the District. The process of transfer has thus been about three times as rapid during this period as compared with the previous thirty years. Of the total number of 654 transfers of villages and shares, 30 were made by moneylenders, 601 by agriculturists and 23 by others; while 61 transfers were made to moneylenders, 508 to agriculturists and 84 to others. Agriculturists therefore lost by 93 transfers or about a seventh of the total number; and of these 32 were made in favour of moneylenders and 61 to others. The amount of property passing into the hands of professional moneylenders during this period was thus not very substantial. The Government revenue due on the property transferred was Rs. 57,000, while the total consideration obtained in lieu of transfer was Rs. 12·66 lakhs or 22 times the land revenue, a very favourable result. Similarly high prices have been realised in the case of land sold by the Collector and it cannot be doubted that, whatever may be the condition of individual proprietors, the value of landed property is greater than it has ever been.

Rates paid for land sublet.

89. The average rate per acre paid for land leased to sub-tenants in 1904-05 was R. 0-13-3 as against the average Government rental of R. 0-10-7. At settlement the rate paid for land sublet was R. 0-15-0 and in 1891-92

R. 1-5-0, the Government rental being about the same. These figures are not very favourable, but it must be remembered that a quantity of land went out of cultivation during the famines, and anybody wishing to cultivate could probably therefore during the last few years obtain it on easy terms.

Landlords and tenants.

90. No proceedings for the conciliation of debts were carried out in Seonī. An important social change, it is stated, is noticeable in the agricultural community, affecting the relative position of landlord and tenant. The patriarchal status of the landlord is rapidly disappearing, this result being due partly to the famines but partly also to legal enactments. The position of the mālguzār is weaker than it was and his opportunities for oppression are fewer; on the one hand he is impoverished, his local and personal influence has diminished; on the other hand the provisions of the Tenancy Act have given greater security of tenure and greater independence to the tenant. As a consequence the relations between landlord and tenant show a tendency to become strained and dependent on the law. The prohibition regarding the transfer of *sīr* rights has in one way benefited the proprietors as a class, but on the other hand it tends to reduce the value of villages and to curtail the borrowing power of the agriculturist landlord. Both proprietors and tenants emerged from the famines in a very bad financial position. In 1902 the Deputy Commissioner estimated that not less than 90 per cent of the tenants were indebted to a greater or less extent. The Haveli or wheat-growing area had suffered least, while deterioration was most marked in the rice villages. For some obscure reason the rainfall in this area had been abnormally low throughout the decade, and there was a general belief that the land had been exhausted by the too constant cultivation of one crop. The people however clung to rice when with a little energy they might easily have put the land under other crops. A good deal of land throughout the rice area had gone out of cultivation.

Material condition of the people.

91. During the last four years however considerable recovery has been made, and the following note by Mr. Chapman on the material condition of the people shows promise of better times :—

'Since 1901 the population has been slowly making up 'lee-way and the births have exceeded the deaths by 40,000. 'The area under crop has now practically recovered to the 'level of 1892 after a terrible decrease during the interven- 'ing years. A great impetus was given to the spread of 'cultivation in 1895, when after a careful inquiry by Mr. 'Hill, Assistant Settlement Officer, 24,500 acres of culturable 'land were excised from Government forest and made avail- 'able for ryotwāri settlement. That there is still a very 'keen demand for land is shown by the innumerable petitions 'which are received for the excision of A class forest in the 'vicinity of mālguzāri villages. The advent of the Sātpurā 'railway has brought about a wonderful change in the eco- 'nomic condition of the District, and a splendid market for 'their produce has now been brought to the doors of the 'people. The scarcity in other parts of India has raised 'enormously the value of the grain produced and last year's 'bumper wheat harvest put a very large sum of money into 'the hands of the cultivators. As ninety per cent of the 'labouring classes are paid in kind, even they are not ad- 'versely affected by the high prices. The people have not yet 'learnt what to do with the comparative wealth which is 'flowing into their pockets. They have little idea of invest- 'ing it in anything but land, and fancy prices are offered 'for any land which comes into the market. The rate at 'which money can be borrowed on landed property has 'greatly fallen, and cases in which the permission of Gov- 'ernment to the transfer of *sīr* land is applied for very 'frequently take the shape of converting an old mortgage 'carrying 24 per cent interest into a new one with the in- 'terest reduced to 12 or even 6 per cent. The productive-

'ness of wheat land can be greatly increased by a system 'of embankments, and here and there we find far-seeing 'mālguzārs investing their money in this way An enormous 'trade in kerosine oil has lately grown up and a bulk oil 'installation is being carried out in Seoni town. I have been 'much struck with the activity of the rural post office. There 'must have been a great increase of late years in the 'correspondence carried from remote villages with the out-'side world. Between 1896 and 1906 the number of post 'offices in the District increased from 18 to 25. The 'number of articles of all classes given out for delivery in 'the former year was 271,000 and in the latter 458,000, 'showing an increase in business during the decade of nearly '70 per cent. Few outward signs of increased prosperity 'are to be seen yet in the District. The people have been 'through bad times and have learnt caution in the school of 'adversity. They are however generally taking to mill-'woven in preference to home-spun cloth, and the former 'may be seen in considerable quantities at any of the country 'bazars Railway travelling is very popular and the trains 'are crowded. Pilgrimages by train have become frequent 'to distant parts of the country. The supply of labour is 'still short throughout the District, and the labouring classes 'command very good wages, especially at places along the 'railway line, where four or five annas a day can easily be 'earned by the coolie. The rates for agricultural labour are 'also rising and there is a marked tendency for wages in 'kind to be commuted into cash payments. Emigration to 'Assam has very much decreased. Granted good years I 'believe that the District stands on the threshold of great 'prosperity. The commercial instincts of the people have 'been awakened and trade and manufacture is taking its 'place beside the time-honoured cultivation of the land.'

PRICES.

Course of grain prices.

92. At the 30 years' settlement the average rate of prices for the years 1845 to 1865 was taken as the basis of the assessment, this working out to wheat 85 lbs., gram 82 lbs., and rice 54 lbs. per rupee. Up to 1861 prices were very low; but from that year a great inflation took place in Seonī as elsewhere, in consequence of the American War. In 1864 the rates were 40 lbs. of wheat and 20 lbs. of rice to the rupee. The Settlement Officer did not however reckon on prices being maintained at the level to which they had been forced up at the time when he wrote, and anticipated that they might fall in future years to between 64 and 80 lbs. per rupee. This anticipation was not realised, and owing to various causes as the Bundelkhand famine of 1868, the opening of the railways to Nāgpur and Jubbulpore soon after 1870, and the subsequent development of the export trade in grain with Europe, the low rates prevailing prior to 1860 have never again been approached. The following statement shows the quinquennial average prices of wheat, rice and gram in pounds per rupee during the currency of the 30 years' settlement :—

	Wheat.	Gram.	Rice.
1866—70 ...	35	28	21
1871—75 ...	56	53	37
1876—80 ...	37	42	34
1881—85 ...	47	55	37
1886—90 ...	37	39	28
1891—95 ...	33	36	26
1896—1900 ...	26	27	22
1901—1905 ...	31	34	24

Settlement rates.

93. In estimating prices at the recent settlement (1896—98), the Settlement Officer took the average of the quinquennial rates above given. But he pointed out that these were the retail prices ruling at Seonī, and that those which the cultivators obtained

for their produce in the interior of the District when selling wholesale were considerably less. He consequently examined the account-books of some leading grain-dealers, and working out similar quinquennial rates, took the average of these and the published prices for the whole period. He thus arrived at a rate of 41 lbs. per rupee for wheat and 47 lbs. for gram, and comparing these with the average prices taken at the 30 years' settlement found that wheat was 100 per cent dearer and gram 73 per cent. He was unable to obtain the wholesale rates for rice and did not therefore work out an average in respect of this grain, but taking the published rates found that rice had increased in price by 77 per cent. His general conclusion was that prices might be considered to have at least doubled since the 30 years' settlement, while he concluded from inquiries made of the more intelligent landlords that the cost of cultivation had not risen by more than 30 per cent. Full justification was therefore forthcoming for an enhancement of 50 per cent in the rental, though the increase actually made was much less than this. A comparison of the rates for the different grains in the table given above shows that at the 30 years' settlement and for some years afterwards gram was about the same price or even more expensive than wheat, and it is the European trade in the latter staple which has operated to give it a higher value than gram in recent years. In seasons of distress or famine however the price of gram still reaches or exceeds that of wheat. Rice is commonly from 2 to 4 lbs. in the rupee more expensive than wheat, the reason being that it is not grown in very large quantities in Seonī and is in the nature of a luxury.

Prices in recent years.

94. Since the settlement wheat has never fallen to the price of 41 lbs. per rupee taken by the Settlement Officer, its lowest rate being 40 lbs. in 1894 and the highest 20 lbs. in 1897. The price in 1903 was 35 lbs. and in 1904-05, 31 lbs. The cheapest price of gram since 1891 was 45 lbs. in 1894, and the dearest 18½ lbs. in 1897, while the rates for rice have varied

from 29 lbs. in 1891 to 17 lbs. in 1897. Generally the level of prices since the settlement has been much higher than those on which it was based, and this fact has no doubt gone some way to compensate agriculturists for their losses during the famines. Kodon and kutkī together constitute the second food staple of the District, and form the sustenance of the bulk of the poorer classes, but their price has not been recorded in the returns in past years. In 1897 the rate of kodon was 22 lbs. to the rupee or not much cheaper than wheat. In 1900 it was 24 lbs. and in 1904-05 had fallen to 38 lbs., this being the rate of the husked grain. In ordinary years it is thus very much cheaper than wheat, but in the famines the difference in price was only 3 or 4 lbs. in the rupee. Cotton was 5 lbs. to the rupee in 1891, and went up to 3 lbs. in 1893, while since 1901 it has been 4 to 4½ lbs.

Prices of miscellaneous articles.

95. The price of salt remained at 18 lbs. with slight fluctuations during the decade ending 1900. In 1901, it was 19 lbs. and fell to 21 lbs. in 1903, 20 lbs. in 1904 and 22 lbs. in 1905 as a result of the successive reductions of the duty. The retail rate in 1903 for small quantities was however 7 pice a seer or at the rate of 18 lbs. to the rupee, thus being 3 lbs. higher than the recorded price. In the same year the wholesale trade price was Rs. 10 per *gon* of 120 seers or at the rate of 24 lbs. to the rupee. In former years salt was very expensive, the prices ranging between 5½ and 11 lbs. to the rupee in the decade 1861—70 and between 15 and 21½ lbs. from 1870 to 1890. The decrease which has been effected in the selling price of this staple by an improved method of taxation and the reduction of the duty cannot but have been a great boon to the people. Sea salt from Bombay is commonly consumed in the District, being called *golandāzi* because it is sold in large balls. Mauritius sugar is generally used and sells at 8 to 9 lbs. to the rupee in large and 6½ to 7 lbs. in small quantities. *Gur* or unrefined sugar from Northern India is sold at 14 lbs. and that

grown in Chhindwāra at 8 lbs. to the rupee. The Chhindwāra sugar is of the best class, being made from the *pachrang* and *pondā* canes. The *gur* produced in the Barghāt tract is generally of the inferior quality called *khāra* and is sold at a low rate. The price of *ghī* is 2½ lbs. wholesale and 2 lbs. retail to the rupee, and has largely increased in recent years. Milk is only sold in Seonī and one or two large villages and varies from 22 lbs. to 32 lbs. to the rupee at different times of the year, being most expensive in the hot weather. A country cloth is sold by the piece of 30 feet by 27 inches. This costs two rupees; ordinary English weaving cloth called *latthā* being sold by the piece of 18 feet by 40 inches for the rupee. A woman's *sāri* or body-cloth of country cloth 24 by 3 feet costs three or four rupees. The *pattā* or coarse white cloth worn by Mehrā and Gond women is sold at about the same rate and is more durable.

WAGES.

Farm-servants.

96. The cash rates of wages in Seonī since 1893 were Rs. 4 on an average during the period from 1893 to 1903, while those of artisans as masons, carpenters and blacksmiths were Rs. 15 during the last decade and in 1903 rose to Rs. 17. Agricultural servants are still usually paid in grain according to customary rates and these vary a good deal in different parts of the District. In the spring crop area a common way of engaging a farm-servant is by *batiā* or share. He receives a fifth of the produce of the holding after the contributions to village servants have been deducted. Advances made to him for food are also deducted at the time of payment with 25 per cent extra for interest. The farm-servant also receives a half of the gleanings of the field, the other half going to his master, and he takes the refuse grain mixed with earth which is left on the threshing-floor. He receives his food on two or three festivals If he watches the crop he is paid extra for it. These wages work out to Rs. 40 a year or Rs. 3-5 a

month in the present state of prices. In rice country the grain wages are 6 *khandīs* (each of 280 lbs.) of unhusked grain a year and Rs. 4 in cash. If payment was made in rice this would be equivalent to Rs. 44 a year or Rs. 3-11 a month. Another two *khandīs* (Rs. 13) are given to the farm-servant at the time of threshing, but this is in return for services rendered by his wife, who collects the manure, spreads the house of her master with cowdung and fetches water for the household; the wife of a farm-servant is also bound to work for his employer at harvest, but for this she is separately paid. In recent years owing to the fluctuations in the price of grain, the custom has been introduced of paying cash wages. The rate of these varies from Rs. 2 to Rs. 3 per month with a blanket and a pair of shoes worth two rupees. In villages near the railway cash wages have now risen to Rs. 4 a month with perquisites worth something over a rupee extra. In return for this the farm-servant must do whatever work is required of him. The average of the different rates works out to something more than Rs. 3 a month. If several servants are employed, one of them is made *chirohī* or headman and he gets Rs. 4 or Rs. 5 a month. A tenant with one pair of bullocks, having a holding of 10 or 12 acres, will not employ a farm-servant if his wife can work. If, as is probable, he keeps a cow or two besides his plough-bullocks and has no son of proper age of his own, he will employ a boy to graze them when required and will pay him two *khandīs* (560 lbs.) of spring grain a year, the value of which is about Rs. 13. If a private grazier is employed he will receive the same pay as a farm-servant or from two to four rupees. If paid in grain he will get a *khandī* of grain (Rs. 6-8) for each pair of bullocks during the rainy season and 8 *kuros* (about Rs. 3) per pair for the other eight months. A man employed for tending a herd of cows is called a *gaikī*. He receives something more than the grain wages of a farm-servant besides two pairs of shoes annually and a blanket every other year. His wife collects the manure of the cows and in

return is given the butter-milk, one or two *khandīs* (of 280 lbs.) of grain and a new *sāri* or body-cloth every year. Such a servant is only kept by owners of large herds of cows. When cattle are made over to the village Ahīr the rate is 2 *kuros* (28 lbs.) of grain for a cow and 4 *kuros* for a she-buffalo. Plough-bullocks are rarely or never sent to graze with the village herd.

Labourers.

97. If a labourer is employed for sowing he will be paid one rupee per plough of land sown, besides some grain which may amount to another eight annas. A plough of land is 10 or 12 acres. Weeding is paid for at daily rates of 6 or 7 pice for a day of about seven hours from 10 or 11 A.M. till dark. The weeding of cotton is sometimes paid for by contract by the *kondhā*, an area of 42 by 28 cubits or about 300 square yards. The rate for this is 4 pice unless the field is much overrun with weeds or labour is scarce, when double or quadruple may have to be paid. The rate of 4 pice a *kondhā* is equivalent to a rupee an acre. Cotton is weeded two or sometimes three times and juār as a rule only once, the cost for this crop being given as two annas a *kondhā* or two rupees an acre. For reaping the wages are about 4 *surias* (4 lbs.) of grain a day. The man who ties up the sheaves gets a pound more than the other reapers. For cutting rice and kodon 6 to 8 lbs. of unhusked grain are paid. For watching the crops the ordinary rate is 2 lbs. of grain a night or 140 lbs. for looking after a crop of juār during the whole period that it is ripening for harvest.

Village artisans and menials.

98. The village carpenter and blacksmith are paid by annual contributions from the cultivators, at the rate of 28 lbs. per plough of two bullocks or 10 to 12 acres of land with presents at seed-time and harvest amounting to another 10 lbs., or 38 lbs. in all. In return for this they repair the iron and wooden implements of agriculture and make some of them, when the materials are supplied to them. Plough-shares are not made by the local Lohār but are

bought separately, costing 12 to 18 annas apiece. For keeping a cart in repair the carpenter must be paid an extra *kuro* or 14 lbs., and for making any cf the parts of a cart he must be paid by contract. The barber is paid by the plough at the same rate as the carpenter and blacksmith, and in return for this he shaves the male members of the family and cuts their hair once a fortnight or once a month. The barber's wife attends on the women of the family and receives presents at festivals and marriages. The Dhobi is paid at the same rate per plough and washes the clothes of the family about once a fortnight, except their loin-cloths which they wash every day themselves. He receives one or two *chapātis* when he brings the clean clothes, and is given a separate present for washing clothes on the occasion of a birth or death. Other menials receiving customary contributions from the tenants are the Gārpagāri or hail averter and the Bhumkā or village priest, whose functions are described in the notice of religion. The Chamār is not usually a village menial, but in many villages he receives the skins of dead cattle and in return for this provides a *nāri* or neck-rope for the bullocks and a pair of shoes for the tenant and each of the farm-servants. If there are several families of Chamārs whose occupation is to cure skins, they divide up the cultivators, a proportion being allotted to each. The Kumhār is not paid by annual contributions but sells his pots. An ordinary cultivator's family will expend about Rs. 3 a year on earthen pots. The Kumhār collects the sweepings from the houses of the village for fuel, or the droppings of cattle in mālguzāri forest. The Basor also sells his baskets and each house will require about two rupees' worth of these annually. The Basor acts as the village musician at weddings and is paid by contract at the rate of five rupees for the party of musicians for the period covered by the marriage festivities. The Basorin acts as the village midwife and receives on an average one rupee at the birth of a boy and eight annas for that of a girl.

Condition of the labouring classes.

99. Mr. Chapman writes of the labouring classes as follows :—'The lower castes generally 'live together in the Gond *pāra* or 'quarter, Gonds, Pardhāns, Mehrās, 'Pankās, and Ahīrs. The Ahīrs of course keep cattle and 'work as graziers either for the community in general or for 'individual employers. They make *ghī* and breed cattle and 'buffaloes, the male buffaloes being bought up by Mukerīs 'and driven down in large herds to Chhattīsgarh, where they 'are used for ploughing. The Ahīr consumes little milk him- 'self except in the form of *dahī* or curds. The Mehrās and 'Pankās weave coarse country cloth and are the class from 'which the kotwār is generally recruited. The Gond appears 'unable to retain the good land in his possession and as soon 'as his holding begins to produce anything like valuable 'crops, he falls back into the position of a farm-labourer and 'his fields too often pass to others to whom he has become 'indebted. The bulk of the Gond population are labourers. 'Till lately they were always paid in kind, but with the 'great rise which has lately taken place in the value of 'wheat, there is a tendency now for payments in kind to be 'commuted into cash. The ordinary wage of a Gond 'labourer is 3 *kuros* or about 24 seers every fifteen days. 'This is generally given in rice, juār or millet. He also 'receives a large sheaf of grain at harvest-time and some- 'thing at sowing. The women are employed by the day 'when required. They never go out to work till about 'twelve, when their household duties are done, and they 'receive daily wages at the same rate as the men. The last 'census showed a very great decline in the population of the 'District. A considerable number of the labouring popula- 'tion have emigrated and the demand for labour is acute. 'The Gond labourer is in chronic debt to his employer and 'looks to him for pecuniary assistance in all domestic occur- 'rences in which custom demands that money should be spent 'in entertaining his fellows. Many masters allow their servants

'to glean their fields for nothing. In other places the result 'of the gleaning is divided in different proportions between 'master and gleaners. At the time of the cutting of the wheat 'harvest there is always a great movement among the labour-'ing classes. Like the hop-pickers at home, whole families 'will travel long distances to places where plenty of har-'vesting is going on. Almost all the inhabitants of the Gond 'quarter keep goats, pigs and fowls, but with the exception 'of the Ahīrs very few have cattle.' They are generally insufficiently supplied with agricultural implements and their ploughing is not uncommonly effected with hired bullocks. The general rate of hire at which a pair of bullocks can be had in the District is 2 *khandīs* (about 600 lbs.) of grain for the season.

MANUFACTURES.

Weaving and dyeing.

100. The manufactures of the District are very unimportant, and the articles hitherto made locally are being displaced in many cases by imported goods. In 1901 the Deputy Commissioner wrote: 'Cheap Manchester goods have displaced the local fabrics. 'Artisans have fallen on evil times, except blacksmiths 'and carpenters, whose trades are subsidiary to agricul-'ture, and the village industries have steadily declined.' Tasar silk was formerly woven at Seonī and Pīparwāni in considerable quantities, the cocoons being grown by Dhīmars in the local forests. Very little silk is now woven and the efforts made to revive the industry have hitherto not had much result. Almost every village contains a few cotton-weavers, but Seonī, Chhapāra and Barghāt are the principal centres. The weaving castes engaged are Koshtās, Katias, Mehrās and Korīs. Imported thread is generally used, but some of the Korīs and Mehrās mix it with the home-spun article. The Korīs stiffen cloth for Baniās by mixing it with rice and gruel. Good *newār* or thick tape for mattresses is woven in white, sometimes variegated by red and black lines, by Gārpagāris and Mehrās. This sells at the

rate of a rupee a seer. Country cloth is dyed in Mungwāni, Chhapāra, Kahāni and other villages. *Al* or Indian madder is still used, but has to a large extent been supplanted by the imported German dye. In Chhapāra the *amowā* green cloths are dyed with a mixture of *al* and myrobalans ; Adegaon was formerly a well-known dyeing centre, but the industry here is nearly extinct. The wooden stamps used by Chhīpas or printers of designs on coloured cloth are now often imported. Hemp is woven and sacking made by Banjārās in the Lakhnādon tahsil and in Chārgaon and Jhilmilī in Seonī. The woollen industry is insignificant.

Other manufactures.

101. Glass bangles are made from imported glass at Chaonrī, Pātan and Chhapāra and lac bangles at Seonī, Chhapāra, Bakhāri and Lakhnādon. A number of gold and silversmiths reside at Seonī, one part of which is known as the Sonāri Mohallā. The village Sonārs make ornaments of very bad silver with a large proportion of alloy and sell them to Gond, Pardhān and other low-caste women. Very little work in brass is done in the District and vessels are usually imported from Mandlā and Bhandāra. Iron implements are made at Piparwāni in the Kurai tract from broken English iron, and are used throughout the south of the District, the Lakhnādon tahsil obtaining its supplies from Narsinghpur and Jubbulpore. Earthen vessels are made in several villages, those of Kanhiwāra and Pachdhār having a special reputation ; a local expression for extreme poverty is 'He is so poor that he has not even a Kanhiwāra cooking-pot in his house.' Vessels for holding water are generally red in colour, and are made porous by mixing ashes or sand with the earth. Those made to hold *ghī* and milk and for cooking purposes are not porous. Earthen vessels are commonly used for cooking not only by Gonds and Muhammadans but by many castes of Hindus. Skins are tanned and leather-work is done at Khawāsa and other villages. Drums are made by Basors and Nagārchis. The Jingars and Mochis use tanned goat skin and make saddles

and bind books in Seonī. In Khawāsa they make *budlīs* or narrow-necked flasks for torch-bearers.

Factories.

102. There are as yet no factories in the District, but the plant for a cotton ginning and pressing machine has been imported by some enterprising native gentlemen with a view to setting up a factory at Chhapāra, the centre of the cotton-growing tract. At present the cotton all goes to Nāgpur by road in an unpressed state. Hemp-pressing machines exist at Seonī, Keolāri and Ghansor, and all the hemp exported is pressed.

Weights and measures.

103. Grain is now sold by weight in Seonī town, but by measure over the remainder of the District. The ordinary measure is the *suria* of 40 tolās or 1 lb. and the following scale is in use:—

One *suria*	=	40 tolās or 1 lb.
One small *kuro*	=	14 *surias* or 7 seers.
One large *kuro*	=	16 *surias* or 8 seers.
One *khandī*	=	20 *kuros* or 320 lbs.

The *kuro* is of various sizes in different parts of the District, that of 7 seers being the commonest. But the *suria* is generally constant at a pound. The *kuro* of 8 seers is in use in the larger villages. In the Adegaon tract the Labhāni *kuro* of 10 seers with the *suria* of 50 tolās is the measure employed. In Kurai the Nāgpur *pailī* of 100 tolās is in use. Raw cotton is weighed by the *khandī* of 13 *paserīs* or 65 seers. The equivalent weights given for the above measures are in wheat, that is a *kuro* measure of wheat weighs 8 seers. A *kuro* measure of gram weighs $7\frac{3}{4}$ seers, of linseed $6\frac{1}{2}$, of til 6, of urad and mūng 8, of masūr $8\frac{1}{4}$, and of rice $8\frac{1}{2}$. A *khandī* of wheat land is $2\frac{1}{2}$ acres, this being the area in which a *khandī* or 320 pounds is sown. But the above quantity is larger than the amount of seed actually used and includes the presents made to village servants and others at sowing time. The *kos* is ordinarily two miles, but the Gondī *kos* may be anything up to five miles.

104. Weekly bazars or markets are held at 48 villages in the District, 25 in the Seonī tahsīl and 23 in Lakhnādon. Barghāt bazar is an important centre for the distribution of the rice grown in the surrounding area. Purchasers come with carts from neighbouring Districts, and buying the rice here, carry it by road for considerable distances. Cattle are also sold here. The market is held on Saturdays. The Budhwāri or Wednesday market of Seonī town is a large one, and those next in importance are Kanhiwāra held on Thursdays, Gopālganj on Saturdays, Jām (Tuesday), Kurai (Friday), Khawāsa (Wednesday) and Keolāri (Friday). Khairā market near Palāri railway station has become of some importance since the construction of the railway. In the most important markets a system prevails of farming to contractors the right to collect fees on produce brought to the market according to a prescribed scale. About one pice in the rupee is charged on each head of cattle sold, two annas a cartload and a pice on each headload of agricultural produce, and four annas a cartload on tobacco and *gur* or unrefined sugar. The proceeds of the farms are credited to District Funds and expended on the sanitation of the villages in which the markets are held. In 1904-05 this system prevailed in the case of 13 villages and the total amount realised was about Rs. 7000, of which nearly Rs. 3000 came from Barghāt. In Seonī town fees are collected by the municipality. Grain for export is not usually brought to the weekly bazars, but retail dealers called Ladaiyās or Kuchīs go round with carts buying up the surplus grain from the cultivators, and bring it to the towns for sale to the exporting merchants.

Weekly markets.

105. Two annual fairs of some importance are held in the District, at Chhapāra and Mundāra. The Chhapāra fair is of long standing, having been established in the time of the Pathān governors who resided there. It was formerly held in the stony bed of the Waingangā, but the site has now been changed to the

Annual fairs.

groves on the south bank of the river, with a considerable increase of comfort to those attending the fair. It is held in the Hindu month of Māgh or in January and February and lasts about six weeks, the ordinary daily attendance being about 4000 persons. The primary object of those who go to the fair is to bathe in the Waingangā, but a large trade in cattle, cloth and other articles is now done, about 8000 head of cattle being sold and some 200 temporary shops established by vendors of goods. Large numbers of old and worthless cattle are sold for slaughter for the sake of the hides and purchasers come from other parts of the Provinces and from Northern India. At the end of the fair an exhibition of agricultural produce is held and prizes are given out of the amount realised from registration fees and shop dues. The Mundāra[1] fair is held at the source of the Waingangā in the village of Partābpur about 11 miles from Seonī. The object of the assembly is to bathe in the tank from which the Waingangā takes its rise, and the principal day of the fair is the full moon of Kārtik (October-November). Mundāra is said to be mentioned in the Mahābhārat as the 'Wainon Tīrth' or source of the Waingangā. The fair lasts for 14 days and the average attendance is about 8000 persons. Some 400 temporary shops are opened for the sale of goods. A small religious fair is also held at Kothīghāt on the Waingangā about five miles from Keolāri on the full moon of Kārtik or at the same time as the Mundāra fair; others take place at the junction of the Waingangā and Hirrī rivers, and at Mathghogrā in the village of Bhaironthān about 8 miles north of Lakhnādon. None of these have any commercial importance.

TRADE.

Exports. Agricultural produce.

106. Wheat (*pissī*) is the principal export of the District and is sent to Bombay for the foreign trade. A considerable quantity of rice is also exported but practically none of it has hitherto gone by rail. The rice grown in the surrounding

[1] See also Gazetteer article Mundāra.

areas is brought for sale to Barghāt market and purchasers bring their carts and carry it for long distances by road to the Nerbudda valley. Of pulses gram, masūr and tiurā are all exported to Bombay. Til is now the principal oilseed exported, while some quantities of *jagnī* and *gullī* or the seeds of mahuā are also sent away. The oil of *karar*, apparently a prickly variety of *kusum* (*Carthamus tinctorius*) which is sown on the borders of wheat fields, is exported in small quantities. Cotton was formerly not sent outside the District to any appreciable extent, but in the last few years the area grown with it has largely expanded and it has become an important product. At present the cotton all goes to Nāgpur in an unpressed state, and in this condition it occupies so much bulk that it is cheaper to carry it by road than rail. The plant for a ginning and pressing machine has just been imported by a few enterprising native gentlemen with a view to setting up a factory at Chhapāra, the centre of the cotton-growing tract. Meanwhile the cartmen reap a rich harvest and the villages along the main roads find a good market for their juār stalks, which they sell at great profit to the cartmen as fodder for their bullocks. The cultivation of *san*-hemp has sprung up since 1890 and between 15,000 and 20,000 acres have been sown with it in recent years. Most of the hemp has hitherto been sent to Jubbulpore by road, but presses have now been erected at Seonī, Keolāri and Ghansor stations and the hemp is pressed there before being put on to the railway. *Ghī* is sent to Kamptee and from there to Berār, Calcutta and Bombay.

Forest produce and other articles.

107. Teak, *sāj* and *bījāsāl* are the principal timbers exported and these and bamboos are usually sent by road to Kamptee and Nāgpur from the Kurai tract, wholesale dealers coming from these towns to make purchases. From the north of the District poles and bamboos are sometimes floated down the Nerbudda to Gwārīghāt. Among minor forest products *harrā* or myrobalans and lac are the chief, and a number of persons

make a living by the collection of these articles both from Government and mālguzāri forests, those belonging to the Dīwān family of Seonī in the Gondī tāluka to the east of the District, furnishing the largest supply outside the Government reserves. Lac is grown almost entirely on the *palās* tree (*Butea frondosa*) in Seonī. Mahuā flowers are also sent to Kamptee for the manufacture of liquor, and other products are *chironjī*, the fruit of the *achār* tree (*Buchanania latifolia*), and the gum of various trees. The horns of village buffaloes are exported for being made into combs, knife-handles and other articles, and a considerable trade is done in the hides of cattle, while the fat is sent away to be made into tallow. The lower castes, including Ahīrs and Gaolīs, rear fowls and send them for sale to Nāgpur and Kamptee.

Imports.

108. All the usual articles are imported. Salt comes from the marshes near Ahmadābād and also from Bombay. The latter is dark in colour and is generally given to cattle. Sugar is obtained from Northern India and *gur* or unrefined sugar both from there and from Chhindwāra. Cotton piece-goods are brought both from Bombay and Calcutta and are generally worn by the better classes in place of hand-made cloth. White thread is obtained from the Nāgpur, Hinganghāt and Badnerā mills and coloured from Bombay, the local weaving industry being almost entirely conducted with mill-spun thread. Caps decorated with lace are obtained from Delhi, tasar silk from Bhāgalpur, and woollen cloth from Amritsar. Brass vessels are imported from Northern India and Poona. Gold, silver and iron are also obtained from Bombay. Kerosine oil is now universally employed for lighting, and a bulk oil installation has been made at Seonī. Turmeric is not much grown locally and is obtained from Bombay and Nāgpur; oranges and plantains come from Nāgpur, and potatoes from Jubbulpore and Chhindwāra. Rice is brought to Barghāt bazar from the adjoining tracts of the Mandlā and Bālāghāt Districts. Manufactured tobacco is obtained from Gayā and Darbhangā

in Bengal and snuff from Benāres. Superior country-made shoes come from Calcutta and Delhi. Two European firms have now established agencies in Seonī for the purchase of grain for export. The centre of the timber trade is at Kurai and Muhammadan dealers come there from Kamptee to make purchases. Baniā traders import cloth, spices and groceries, and Bohrās deal in copper and hardware. Kerosine oil is imported wholesale by a European firm. Manihārs or Muhammadan pedlers take their wares round to the local bazars for retail sales.

Statistics of exports and imports.

109. The railway was only opened in 1904, but already in 1905 the traffic had assumed considerable proportions, the exports for this year amounting to more than 8 lakhs of maunds of the value of Rs. 22 lakhs,[1] of which 5½ lakhs of maunds value Rs. 15 lakhs represented the exports of wheat. The imports for 1905 were more than 1½ lakhs of maunds valued at Rs. 15 lakhs; these included cotton manufactures 10,000 maunds value Rs. 6 lakhs, sugar 19,000 maunds value Rs. 2 lakhs, and salt 34,000 maunds value Rs. 95,000. Of the total exports 70 per cent were despatched from Seonī station, 15 per cent from Palāri and 8 per cent from Keolāri, while Seonī station received 90 per cent of the imports and Keolāri 5 per cent.

COMMUNICATIONS.

Railways.

110. The narrow-gauge Sātpurā extension of the Bengal-Nāgpur Railway was opened in 1904. The branch from Neinpur junction through Seonī to Chhindwāra has a length of 56 miles in the District, passing through its centre and following closely the line of the Seonī-Chhindwāra and Seonī-Mandlā roads. The stations on the line are Keolāri, Palāri, Kanhiwāra, Bhomā, Seonī and Pīpardehī, all of which are situated in the Seonī tahsīl. The principal line between Gondia and Jubbul-

[1] This figure omits all articles of which the details are not published in the trade returns.

pore also traverses the north-east of the Lakhnādon tahsil, with the stations of Ghansor, Binaiki and Shikāra and a length of 32 miles in the District.

Roads.

111. The Great Northern Road from Nāgpur to Jubbulpore, metalled and bridged throughout except at the Nerbudda, passes from north to south of the District, ascending the Sātpurā plateau from the south at Kurai ghāt and leaving it again at the Selwā ghāt for Jubbulpore. Seonī, Chhapāra and Lakhnādon are all situated on the road, which runs for 89 miles in the District. This was for a time the most important road in India, as the mails from Bombay to Calcutta were carried by tonga from Nāgpur to Jubbulpore before the Great Indian Peninsula and East Indian Railway systems had been connected by the line from Bhusāwal to Jubbulpore. The ascent of the hills at Kurai is an admirable piece of engineering work, the gradients being extremely easy and passable for the heaviest carts. A fine bridge spans the Waingangā at Chhapāra. Other metalled roads are those from Seonī to Bālāghāt through Barghāt having a length of 27 miles in the District and the Seonī-Chhindwāra road with a length of 11 miles. A short distance of the Mandlā road is also metalled. The principal gravelled roads are those from Seonī to Katangī, from Lakhnādon to Ghansor, from Seonī to Mandlā and from Keolāri to Uglī. The Katangī road crosses the Hirrī river on an iron suspension bridge. The importance of the Seonī-Mandlā and Seonī-Chhindwāra roads will be largely decreased by the opening of the railway, which runs practically alongside of them. The other roads leading to Seonī will still serve the purpose of feeders inasmuch as a very large proportion of the trade of the District concentrates at Seonī town. A gravelled road also exists leading from Lakhnādon to Narsinghpur, but this will not be maintained in its present condition now that the railway has been opened. The length of metalled roads is 133 and of unmetalled 116 miles and the maintenance charges are about Rs. 64,000

All these roads are under the Public Works Department. The District Council maintains a number of village tracks at a trifling outlay. It is proposed to construct some new surface roads from the surplus local funds, the principal of which will be a road from Kahāni to Palāri crossing the Waingangā near Kundāri with a branch from here to Sunwāra and perhaps eventually to Ganeshganj; another from Seonī through Mungwāni to Jām; and also roads from Chhapāra to Kanhiwāra, from Arī to Barghāt and Barghāt to Ashtā and from Uglī to Paunār through Pandarwāni. These routes should give easy access to the railway from a large area of the District. Previous to the construction of the railway the trade of the District was almost entirely along the Great Northern Road, the produce of the area south of Chhapāra going to Kamptee and from the north of the Lakhnādon tahsīl to Jubbulpore. Trade has however at once been diverted to the railway and the importance of Kamptee as a depôt for the collection of produce from the District has already greatly declined. From the hilly country in the east and west of the Lakhnādon tahsīl carriage has hitherto been by pack-bullocks and all over the rest of the District by carts.

CHAPTER VI.

FORESTS AND MINERALS.

FORESTS.

Government forests. Extent and description.

112. The Government forests cover an area of 827 square miles or just over a quarter of that of the District. They lie in two large blocks on the slopes of the Sātpurās on the north and south, while broken patches extend more or less across the céntre of the plateau. The northern forests forming the Nerbudda and Dhūma ranges occupy 250 square miles; those of the centre, divided into the Chhapāra and Ugli ranges, 250 square miles; and those of the south comprised in the Kurai and Gangīnāla ranges, 320 square miles. The forests are mainly situated on hills, sometimes precipitous and much cut up by ravines. The crop is mixed, varying in character according to the soil and locality. The protection afforded to some tracts by closure to grazing and prevention from fire has affected their condition, and the growth on such areas compares favourably with those unprotected. Teak is the principal tree but does not grow pure, though it is sometimes the most abundant species in the forests in which it occurs. It generally grows on the slopes of the hills and in the valleys intersecting them. On the hills the trees attain to no great height and quickly become hollow; but in the valleys teak reaches a height of 60 feet and healthy trees of this species have been measured of four feet in girth. In the north the growth of teak is frequently stunted and crooked. The finest teak is found in the Kurai range where there are three plantations. Bamboos occur in most forests and occasionally form dense thickets in the Kurai range, though they are scarce to the west of the Great Northern Road. They are fairly plentiful in parts of the Gangīnāla range and also in the north-east of the Nerbudda range, but in the other forests

of the centre and north are not usually either very common or well grown. The principal species occurring in the mixed forests are *sāj* (*Terminalia tomentosa*), *dhaurā* (*Anogeissus latifolia*), *tendū* (*Diospyros tomentosa*), *lendia* (*Lagerstrœmia parviflora*), *aonlā* (*Phyllanthus Emblica*), and *achār* (*Buchanania latifolia*). *Tinsā* (*Ougeinia dalbergioides*) grows in most of the forests, being more plentiful in the northern ranges. *Sāleh* (*Boswellia serrata*) is also common in the north and *khair* (*Acacia Catechu*) is found in these and in parts of the other forests. It occurs in considerable quantities in the Gangīnāla range in the Khawāsa forests. *Sāleh* is abundant on some of the northern hills and with it occur *moyen* (*Odina Wodier*), and *gabdi* (*Cochlospermum Gossypium*). In many places the forests are exceedingly poor and open, consisting of scrubby *sāj*, *aonlā*, *tendū* and *achār*.

Statistics of revenue.

113. The following statement shows the revenue of the forests under the principal heads:—

	Timber.	Fuel.	Grazing and grass.	Bamboos.	Minor produce.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1881-82 ...	7,000	5,000	36,000	14,000	4,000
1891-92 ...	15,000	6,000	46,000	9,000	6,000
1902-03 ...	9,000	3,000	22,000	4,000	5,000
1903-04 ...	7,000	2,000	27,000	5,000	7,000
1904-05 ...	9,000	8,000	27,000	9,000	12,000

The local demand is principally for fuel, brushwood, grazing and edible products, while the people take small poles to build their houses. Traders from Jubbulpore carry teak timber of one to four feet in girth and bamboos, and poles and bamboos are floated from the Nerbudda range to Gwārīghāt. But the principal markets are the Nāgpur and Wardhā Districts, from which a good demand is available for

the produce of the Kurai and Gangīnāla ranges. The system of commutation is in force throughout the Division and nearly the whole revenue is derived from grazing dues and commutation fees. The small demand for building wood is met by allowing purchasers to cut according to their requirements with the permission of the Forest Divisional Officer, payment being made under the license system. The right to collect minor forest produce such as mahuā, lac and myrobalans and to cut wood for the preparation of catechu has generally been leased annually or for a term of years. The number of animals annually entering the forests for grazing is about 200,000. The figures were large in past years but declined with the introduction of protective measures against grazing. The new rules allowing favourable rates to agriculturists have again effected an increase in the number of animals brought to the forests. With the exception of about 50 square miles, all the forests are now closed to browsers, while about 200 square miles are entirely closed for grazing.

System of administration.

114. The following statement shows the revenue, expenditure and surplus from the forests in several years :-

	Revenue.	Expenditure.	Surplus.
	Rs	Rs.	Rs.
1881-82 ...	... 77,000	28.000	49,000
1891-92 ...	... 90,000	35.000	55,000
1901-02 ..	... 61,000	42,000	19,000
1902-03 ...	... 55,000	43 000	12.000
1903-04 ...	... 63,000	40,000	23,000
1904-05 ...	... 68,000	38,000	30,000

In past years the forests were worked under the license system admitting unregulated fellings by the people themselves. Regulation of fellings was commenced in 1893, and a system of departmental fellings was initiated for a few months but was soon abandoned as being expensive and unprofitable. Working plans began to be drawn up in 1896

and between that year and 1901 were sanctioned for all the ranges. The bulk of the area has been formed into circles, each of which is subdivided into 30 compartments, thus providing for a 30 years' rotation on the basis of felling one compartment each year. In a few areas a 15 years' rotation has been adopted, while in others owing to the absence of a market the forests will not be regularly worked at present. Certain areas are left permanently open for grazing. In 1904-05 the Forest Staff consisted of a Deputy Conservator, 3 Rangers, 3 Deputy Rangers, 9 Foresters and 91 permanent and 30 temporary Forest Guards. In the Kurai range teak plantations were established during the years 1868—70 and 1877—80. In part of the area the seed was sown in pits dug in lines six feet apart; while the other method was to sow the seed in ploughed lines without pits being dug. The latter system did not yield good results, but the plantations at Sakāta have been very successful. In 1903—05 attempts were made to plant sandalwood, and the earlier plants are stated to be doing well. In 1904-05 fire protection with special watchers was attempted over 360 square miles of forest. The Dulāl, Amāgarh, Kothāsa and Chaonrī felling series are worked as coppice with standards, the main yield from which is fuel.

Private forests.

115. In addition to the Government forests the District contains 414 square miles of tree-forest and 352 square miles of scrub jungle and grass in private hands. The total area of forest and grass land is thus nearly 1600 square miles or about half of that of the District. The mālguzāri forests are as a rule well distributed, the only tract which is conspicuously defective in this respect being the Seonī Havelī which extends for a distance of about 20 by 15 miles to the west and northwest of Seonī town. The best private forests are situated in the Gondī estate in the Barghāt tract belonging to the Dīwān family of Seonī; the Darāsi estate belonging to Rai Bahādur Dādu Gulāb Singh to the south and south-east of Seonī; and

the villages round Kedārpur in the north-east of the District which are in the hands of several small proprietors. The villages near Dongaria and Bādalpur belonging to the Kanhiwāra estate also contain some good timber. The best private forests contain teak of as good quality as is to be found in most of the Government reserves, as also *sāj* (*Terminalia tomentosa*) and *bījāsāl* (*Pterocarpus Marsupium*). As a rule they are fairly well conserved and are not overworked. The villagers have the free use of all the produce except the better kinds of building timber, of which most proprietors are very chary. The private forests are habitually grazed over, but small areas, especially in villages near the Great Northern Road, are protected and dealt with as grass reserves, the constant string of cart traffic along the road during the open season producing a great demand for grass. Small areas are also preserved here and there for grass suitable for thatching. The income from the private forests of the District was estimated at last settlement to be nearly Rs. 15,000, on which a rebate of more than Rs. 3000 was granted to allow for fluctuations. Tenants have often a prescriptive right to collect the mahuā from trees standing within or in some cases outside their holdings.

Roadside arboriculture.

116. Roadside arboriculture has until within a recent period received at best only intermittent attention. Of 250 miles of road under the control of the Public Works Department avenues are wholly or partially established on 38; they are not required on 47 miles where the roads pass through forest, and 165 miles remain to be provided with avenues. The efforts of the Department are at present mainly directed to the Great Northern Road which has avenues for a length of about 24 miles, while they are required on 44 more. Five nurseries have been established for this road, each in charge of a coolie on five rupees a month. Two other nurseries are maintained for the Seonī-Bālāghāt and the Seonī-Mandlā roads; the former road has avenues along six miles and

requires them for thirteen more, while on the Seonī-Mandlā road only two miles have been planted and forty miles remain to be provided with avenues. The expenditure of the Department is at present about Rs. 1000 annually, but it is hoped to raise it to Rs. 1500 in order to enable better progress to be made. The District Council have undertaken the provision of an avenue for the Babaria Circuit road and are also doing some work on the Lakhnādon-Narsinghpur road, the village road of Chhapāra and the road from Seonī to Rajolā, as well as on the Bandol and Parāna Parās encamping grounds. Two nurseries are maintained at Seonī and Lakhnādon. The expenditure of the Council has hitherto been only about Rs. 200 annually, but it is intended to raise this to Rs. 600 with the assistance of a Provincial grant. The avenues already established on the roads of the District consist mainly of mango, *jāmun* (*Eugenia Jambolana*), *siris* (*Albizzia Lebbek*), banyan, *gūlar* (*Ficus glomerata*), *babūl* (*Acacia arabica*) and pīpal trees; but for future plantation the mango, *jāmun*, mahuā and *nīm* are considered to be the most suitable species. These four varieties are of rapid growth, give good shade and are shapely in form. The *babūl* which is a very common tree along the roads at present, finds no favour with the local authorities in the Seonī District.

MINERALS.

Minerals.

117. No mines are worked in the District at present, nor has any evidence hitherto been forthcoming to show that it contains mineral deposits of commercial importance. Iron is found in the Kurai range in the south and was formerly extracted by native methods, but has now been displaced by English iron. Other deposits occur in the valley of the Hirrī river. In Khairā on the Sāgar river, 23 miles from Seonī towards Mandlā, coal is said to have been discovered. The sands of the Pachdhār and Bāwanthari rivers have long been washed

for gold in insignificant quantities. An inferior kind of mica has been met with in Rūkhar on the Seonī-Nāgpur road and the hills near it. A smooth greyish white chalk is obtained near Chhapāra on the north bank of the Waingangā. Light-coloured amethysts and topazes are found among the rocks in the Adegaon tract. A good hard stone is obtained from quarries in the hills and in the villages of Chakkī-Khamaria, Janāwarkhedā and Khankrā from which mill-stones, rolling slabs and mortars are made and sold all over Seonī and the adjoining Districts of Chhindwāra and Bhandāra. A close search in the metamorphic and crystalline area in the south of the District would probably lead to the discovery of manganese-bearing rocks.

CHAPTER VII.

FAMINE.

Early famines.

118. No record of famine up to and including the early years of British administration remains. From an enquiry held in 1868 it appears that in 1819 severe distress prevailed during the hot weather and rains. During its continuance tradition states that the price of grain was 8 seers to the rupee,[1] and people sold their children and instances were known of human flesh having been consumed. From 1823 to 1827 the District suffered from a succession of short crops due to floods, hail and blight and resulting in the desertion of many villages. In 1833-34 severe distress was prevalent from May to October. It was said that parents frequently sold their children in order to buy food and many persons died of starvation. Grain was imported by Government from Jubbulpore and Chhattīsgarh, and the export of grain was forbidden. Advances were granted to the village lessees and a fourth of the land-revenue demand was suspended. The distress ceased with the new autumn harvest. The spring crops of 1854-55 were totally destroyed by rust, and this year is spoken of as *Jhirī kī sāl* by the people to the present day. Scarcity was experienced for four or five months. The export of grain was forbidden and tahsīldārs were asked to employ as many persons as possible on public works. In 1868, the year of the Bundelkhand famine, the monsoon was very heavy in June and July and ceased prematurely, only 4 inches being received in August and 5 in September. The autumn crops were ruined, but as in subsequent seasons of the same character, the land was very carefully prepared for the spring sowings, and with the assistance of some showers in the cold weather, the spring crops were above the average.

---

[1] At this period the ordinary price was 60 seers or cheaper.

Some distress prevailed from February to October, especially among the forest tribes. Small works were undertaken from the District Local Funds and advances were made to landowners in petty amounts. The inhabitants of Seonī gave food to 250 persons daily for several months and relief was also distributed at various centres in the Katangī tahsīl. It was reported that more than 1000 persons had abandoned their caste and enrolled themselves as Dhers or sweepers in order to obtain food. A certain amount of mortality occurred from privation, mainly among the aged and infirm. In 1873 the rains were excessive in June and July and stopped abruptly at the end of August. The autumn harvest was very poor, but with seasonable showers in the cold weather, excellent spring crops were obtained. Some slight scarcity was felt in the rice tracts. In 1878 the rains were heavy and continuous up to the end of September and the fields could not be properly tilled for the spring sowings. The ground dried up rapidly in October, and much of it was too hard to be sown before the necessary preparation could be completed. In the Lakhnādon tahsīl also heavy storms injured the growing crops, and the poorer classes were pressed for food.

The recent cycle of bad years.

119. The recent cycle of bad years began from 1892-93, but up to 1896 the seasons were by no means so unfavourable in Seonī as in other Districts. In 1893 rainy and cloudy weather in January, February and March, coupled with occasional hail-storms, severely injured the spring crops and the harvest was only three-fifths of an average. In the following year, however, the rain in the winter months was much lighter in Seonī than elsewhere, and the spring crops were quite successful, the combined outturn being 85 per cent of normal. In 1894-95 unseasonable rain again fell in the cold weather and the spring crops partly failed, the return for both harvests being 76 per cent of an average crop. A proportion of the revenue was suspended in a num-

ber of villages in this year. The monsoon of 1895-96 was excellent up to the middle of September, when it stopped abruptly and only one or two slight showers were received during the remainder of the year. The rice crop was only half of a full harvest and the germination of the spring crops was defective, wheat yielding no more than rice; the other autumn and spring crops were fairly good according to the returns, but it must be doubted whether these were correct, as severe distress appears to have existed throughout the year. The death-rate for 1896 was 63 per mille and the birth-rate sank to 24. The cropped area decreased by 78,000 acres in the following year. The price of wheat rose from 20 seers in 1894 to 15 in 1895 and 13 in 1896. The Government forests were thrown open for the collection of edible fruits and roots and one road-work was started, but never attracted more than a few hundred persons, while about a hundred paupers were supported by private charity in Seonī and Lakhnādon. These measures must, however, have failed to render the real extent of the distress apparent.

The famine of 1897.

120. In 1896 the rains were again abundant up to the end of August and then abruptly ceased. The autumn harvest failed almost completely and much of the land became too dry to be sown with the cold weather grains. Seasonable showers were, however, received in December and January, and so much of the wheat and gram as was able to germinate gave a fair outturn. As the District was at a distance from the railway, prices were naturally lower than those ruling elsewhere and the consequent tendency to the export of grain led to a small grain riot in Seonī town and some dacoities in the Lakhnādon tahsīl. Severe distress was found prevailing in October 1896, and three poor-houses and two local fund works were opened. This was followed by the institution of relief-centres for the assistance of starving wanderers. Regular relief works under the Public Works

Department were started in January, and small works consisting in the embankment of fields in the ryotwāri villages of the Lakhnādon tahsīl were managed by the Deputy Commissioner. A number of tanks were also constructed or repaired and some forest roads and other works were undertaken, while advances were made to mālguzārs for works in their villages, more especially in the Uglī and Barghāt tracts. Poor-houses were opened in Seonī and Lakhnādon by private subscription in December 1896 and were afterwards taken over by Government. Village relief was begun in March 1897, but did not obtain important dimensions until the rains, when as many as 13,600 persons were in receipt of this form of assistance. Children's kitchens were opened in the rains and the Deputy Commissioner wrote of them that they constituted the only effectual means for the prevention of child-mortality, and added that many mālguzārs took great pride in the management of their kitchens.

Principal statistics of the famine.

121. The highest number of persons in receipt of all forms of assistance was 19,000 or 5 per cent of the population in September 1897 and the direct expenditure on famine relief was Rs. 4·5 lakhs. About half the land revenue was suspended and considerable sums were distributed in loans and grants from the Famine Relief Funds, the sum obtained from the latter being more than a lakh. The death-rate remained at about 4 per mille per month during the first part of the year, and rose to 7 per mille in June, 8 in July and 12 in August, the rate for the year being more than 77 per mille, while the birth-rate was only 22 per mille. The average price of wheat during 1897 was 10 seers per rupee and of rice 8½ seers.

The years 1898 and 1899.

122. A long break in the rains in June 1897 was unfavourable to the rice crop, as many of the high-lying fields could not be sown, and as there was no cold-weather rain until February, the spring crops were also below the average. The rice tracts

of Uglī and Barghāt showed serious deterioration as the effect of the famine. In the following year the winter months were again rainless and the spring crops were short.

The famine of 1900.

123. In 1899 the total rainfall was only 23 inches as against the average of 53. The monsoon failed practically from the end of July and between 4 and 7 inches only were received in August. The autumn crops with the exception of cotton and partially of kodon were a complete failure, and much of the spring crop area was too dry to be sown, though with the assistance of showers in December and January wheat gave half an average outturn. As in other Districts the organisation of relief was prompt and efficacious, and owing to the return given by wheat and kodon the famine was not so severe in Seonī as in the south and east of the Province. Six large works were opened under the Public Works Department, all of which were devoted to the construction and improvement of tanks. The principal tanks made were those of Arī, Mānegaon, Borī, Barghāt, Uglī, Dāmijholā, Mahtā and the Babaria tank at Seonī; a large number of small works were also managed by the Civil Department, both by officers specially appointed and by grants to mālguzārs. A portion of the railway embankment was also constructed. Grass-cutting was undertaken at three centres, and payment was made to adults at the rate of 5 pice for a 50 pound bundle of grass and to children at 3 pice for one of 30 pounds, only one bundle being accepted from one person in a day. Owing to the extent of forest and grass land, however, no real scarcity of fodder was experienced and the grass was sold at a loss. A total of 118 kitchens were opened in the Seonī and Lakhnādon tahsīls and in July 1900 about 24,000 persons were receiving food at these. Village relief was organised in conjunction with the distribution of cooked food.

The famine of 1900 (continued).

124. Curiously enough the highest number of persons in receipt of all forms of assistance was recorded in January 1900, amounting

to 45,000 persons or 12 per cent of the population. The numbers then fell off for the cold weather harvest and began to rise again in May and June, but in this month the total only reached 43,000. After June the figures steadily declined as should be the case when the famine has been really well administered. The direct expenditure on relief was more than 6½ lakhs. The bulk of the land revenue was suspended, and more than two lakhs were distributed in loans and charitable grants. Agricultural loans were issued on the joint security of all cultivators in the village who were in need of them and this system was found to work very well. In Seonī itself a *dharamsāla* or institution for the distribution of cooked food was supported by private subscription, and a number of wells were also built by private persons, Mr. Gulām Mustaphā, E. A. C., completing the jubilee well at Seonī at his own cost. The mortality for the year 1900 was only 32 per mille or practically normal. The average price of wheat for 1900 was a little more than 10 seers for a rupee, while gram and rice were more expensive than 10 seers. Prices therefore were much on the same level as in the previous famine, the District being still far removed from a line of railway. In the wheat tracts the famine was little felt, but the Deputy Commissioner considered that the rice area would need three years of good harvests to recover its normal prosperity and in fact small abatements of land revenue have been made here up to 1904. The record of past failures of the crops appears to show that while famine has usually been due to the premature cessation of the monsoon, untimely rain and cloud in the winter months has been as often responsible for seasons of scarcity and slight distress.

CHAPTER VIII.

LAND REVENUE ADMINISTRATION.

Revenue administration prior to British rule.

125. Neither the Gond nor Marāthā Governments recognised any kind of right in land, and the cultivators were only protected by the strong custom enjoining hereditary tenure. The rule of the Gonds was never oppressive, but the policy of the Marāthās was latterly directed to the extortion of the largest possible revenue. Rents were generally collected direct, and leases of villages were granted only for very short terms. The measure, however, which contributed most largely towards the impoverishment of the country was the levy of the revenue before the crops on which it was charged could be cut and sold. Rents were paid in three instalments:—First, *sāoni* in July; second, *aghanī* in October; and third, *chaitī* in February; and this made borrowing necessary in every village. The result was that a tenant had frequently to give over the whole produce of his field, in lieu of the amount borrowed by him, for payment of the exorbitant rent and its interest, and had again to borrow for his food. In 1810, eight years before coming under British rule, it was reported that Seonī had paid a revenue of more than three lakhs of rupees, but in the interval the exactions of the last Marāthā sovereign Appa Sāhib, and the depredations of the Pindāris, had caused the annual realisations to shrink to less than half this sum. On taking over charge of the District Major O'Brien wrote:—

'This province consists of 1496 villages, divided into 12 'parganas. The inhabited villages now only amount to 887, 'of which 40 are in jāgīr, while the remaining 609 are 'entirely deserted. As far back as 1811-12, it is reported to 'have paid a revenue of Rs. 3·25 lakhs, but in consequence

'of the depredations of the Pindāris in 1816-17, it sunk to 'Rs. 1·85 lakhs, and in the ensuing year, 1817-18, when I 'received charge it was reduced to Rs. 1·46 lakhs. There is 'an evident cause for the difference in these two years, as in 'the former one a tax was ordered to be levied of one lakh of 'rupees, to meet part of the expenses attending the marriage 'of the Appa Sāhib, which exaction distressed the generality, 'and ruined many. The war breaking out at the close of the 'year 1817, every rupee was called for that could be forced 'out of the unfortunate inhabitants, and although I had 'established the British authority so early as January there 'only remained due Rs. 51,805 at that time.' The period of short-term settlements, which followed the commencement of our administration, constituted in Seonī, as elsewhere in the Central Provinces, a series of attempts to realise a revenue equal to, or higher than, that nominally paid to the Marāthās, from a District whose condition had seriously deteriorated..

Early British settlements.

126. Owing to the substantial changes which have since taken place in the area of the District the figures of the early settlements do not afford any accurate basis for comparison with that now existing and it is therefore unnecessary to give them at length. Three years after the cession in 1818 the demand rose to 1·76 lakhs in a quinquennial settlement following on two annual ones. This was succeeded by a decennial settlement on a slightly reduced demand and in 1835 a settlement of 20 years was made by Major Low which lowered the revenue to Rs. 1·34 lakhs. Even under this greatly decreased assessment some portions of the District broke down and the demand had to be revised, especially in parts of the Lakhnādon tahsīl inhabited by Gonds. The settlement had at first been of a progressive nature, the proposed demand being enhanced slightly at intervals of five years, but this system was abandoned and the revenue of the second quinquennial period was retained for the remainder of

the settlement. This was due to expire in 1855, but the disturbances consequent on the Mutiny prevented any arrangements for revision and the settlement continued in force until 1864-65, when the 30 years' settlement was introduced. The rise of prices beginning about 1861 and accentuated by the cotton crisis following on the American War restored prosperity and revived the demand for land.

The 30 years' settlement.

127. A survey was undertaken and completed between 1859 and 1863 under the supervision of Mr. R. A. Sterndale and other officers, and the settlement was completed between 1860 and 1865 by Captain Thomson, the Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Sterndale and others. The Report was written by Captain Thomson and published in 1867. At the commencement of the settlement the Raigarh tract, which had previously been attached to the Mandlā District, was made over to Captain Thomson for assessment and his Report contains a description of it. After the settlement it became part of the new Bālāghāt District. Mr. Fuller described the principles of the 30 years' settlement as follows:—'It was difficult to make an estimate of the enhancement 'which might be obtained, since there were no statistics 'available of the cultivated area of the assets of former settle-'ments with which a comparison could be made. But from 'the rise in prices which had taken place it was assumed that 'an enhancement of 50 per cent could be borne. Taking a 'kind of mean between the former prices and those ruling at 'the time, which had been forced up by the cotton famine in 'Europe, it was assumed that the lowest rate to which the 'price of wheat would fall would be between Rs. 4 and Rs. 5 'a *khandī* or 30 to 40 seers a rupee, and as this rate was 'nearly double that prevailing at the time of the former 'settlement, it was concluded that the revenue might safely be 'enhanced by a half. The assets liable to assessment seem 'to have been only the profits from cultivation and the *sāyar*

'income, the amount of which was put at only Rs. 4,000. In 'parganas where the village papers showed assets which 'would justify a large enhancement they seem to have 'been the principal guide to assessment, and in this case 'of course each village was assessed on its own merits 'and without reference to the *chak* in which it might be 'included. This seems to have been the procedure followed 'in the Seonī pargana as well as in the Ashtā and Uglī tāluks. 'But where the village papers appeared to understate the 'assets they were discarded and a valuation rate adopted. 'For this purpose the villages were marked off into *chaks* or 'groups and villages within each *chak* were grouped into 'classes, for each of which an all-round area rate was adop-'ted. The area rates used in pargana Katangī seem to have 'been based on the rates of incidence of the revenue, paid 'by highly assessed villages, on the cultivated acre. In 'pargana Lakhnādon the rates seem to have been deduced 'from the rents paid by and recorded against tenants in '*muāfi* villages where the proprietors had no object in con-'cealing their assets.'

Results of the settlement.

128. The revenue was raised from Rs. 1·37 to Rs. 2·27 lakhs or by 67 per cent. The waste and forest land in which Government reserved proprietary rights was 1134 square miles or 21 per cent of the total area. It was not the function of the Settlement Officer to enhance the rental, which it was supposed would adjust itself to the new revenue after its announcement. In order to reduce the revised assessment to the authorised proportion of 50 per cent or half the assets, the rental should have risen by 30 per cent. This was generally the case and in several parganas the rental was increased to more than double the Government demand. The ultimate proportion which the revenue bore to the revised assets was 48 per cent. Somewhat over a quarter of the whole number of tenants, holding two-fifths of the total tenant area, were awarded absolute

occupancy or occupancy rights. The revenue of the 30 years' settlement amounted to Rs. 1·62 lakhs on the area now constituting Seonī. Subsequently to the settlement the bulk of the old Katangi tahsīl was transferred to the new Bālāghāt District, and a number of villages below the Sātpurā hills to Nāgpur, while Seonī received the Adegaon estate from Chhindwāra. A number of other small exchanges of territory with adjoining Districts took place in later years.

Currency of the 30 years' settlement.

129. During the currency of the 30 years' settlement the District progressed steadily in agricultural prosperity until the year 1893-94 when a succession of poor seasons and failures of the harvest began. Still in the years 1895—97, when attestation for revision of settlement took place, the net cropped area had increased from 544,000 to 652,000 acres or by 20 per cent, and the cultivated area from 550,000 to 823,000 acres or by 50 per cent, while the acreage irrigated and that devoted to double crops gained largely. It was considered that the prices of agricultural produce had risen by nearly 100 per cent over those on which the 30 years' settlement was based. The area held by tenants had increased from 400,000 to 660,000 acres and their payments from Rs. 2·42 to Rs. 4·09 lakhs. The home farm of the proprietors had increased from 149,000 to 200,000 acres.

The settlement of 1896—98. Cadastral survey.

130. As in other Districts a new cadastral survey was undertaken prior to the revision of settlement and was completed between the years 1887 and 1892, a traverse survey showing the boundaries of villages being effected simultaneously. The number of patwāri's circles in the District was fixed at 129, and the number of fields separately surveyed amounted to nearly a million, giving an average of 403 per square mile of cultivated area. The cost of the cadastral survey was

Rs. 30 and of the traverse survey Rs. 35 per square mile.

Procedure of the settlement.

131. The settlement was effected between the years 1895 and 1898, the Settlement Officer being Khān Bahādur Aulād Husain, who wrote the Report. The assessment was made according to the soil-unit system now prescribed in the Central Provinces. The different soils and positions distinguished have been given in the chapter on Agriculture. No information as to the acreage rates imposed on each class of soil is available either in the Settlement Report or in the Settlement Annexures.

Enhancements of the rental.

132. The area held by *mālik-makbūzas* declined from about 9000 to 8400 acres, in spite of the fact that some 1200 acres of land retained rent-free for themselves by proprietors when transferring their villages were now recorded in this right. Their payments were raised from Rs. 3300 to Rs. 4400 or by 35 per cent, but much of this increase was due to assessment of the land held rent-free against the mālguzār by former proprietors. Their acreage rate was raised from R. 0-5-7 to R. 0-8-5. Absolute occupancy tenants held 47,000 acres as against 68,000 at the previous settlement, the substantial decrease being due to relinquishments in the early years of the settlement, when the advantages attaching to this class of tenure were not understood. The number of holdings was nearly 2400. Their rental was raised from Rs. 31,000 to Rs. 37,000 or by 21 per cent, the acreage rate being R. 0-12-6 as against R. 0-9-10 at the 30 years' settlement. Occupancy tenants held 207,000 acres included in nearly 12,000 holdings as against 79,000 acres in 1864-65, the large increase in the area held in this right being due to its acquisition by 12 years' possession under the old Tenancy Act. Occupancy right over a portion of the *sīr* land was also awarded to some *thekādārs* or farmers who were not

found to be entitled to a grant of protected status, with the consent of the village proprietors. The payments of occupancy tenants were raised from Rs 1,28,000 before revision to Rs. 1,45,000, giving an enhancement of Rs. 17,000 or 13 per cent. The acreage rate imposed was R. 0-11-2 as against R. 0-9-11 both at the 30 years' settlement and before revision. The area held by ordinary tenants was 404,000 acres as against 253,000 acres at the previous settlement. Of this 314,000 acres were held by tenants who had no land in other right, and 90,000 by tenants of superior class in ordinary right. The number of holdings was 26,500. The actual land held in this right had very largely changed, for while occupancy tenure had been acquired over many holdings held in ordinary right at the 30 years' settlement, this decrease was much more than counterbalanced by the large expansion of cultivation which had taken place. The rental of ordinary tenants had risen during the currency of settlement from Rs. 1·51 to Rs. 2·50 lakhs, the corresponding figures of rental per acre being R. 0-9-7 and R. 0-10-0 respectively. The rental was raised at revision of settlement to Rs. 2·65 lakhs or by 6 per cent, the new acreage rate falling at R. 0-10-6. Rack-renting was practically unknown and nowhere was any systematic practice of it found. But in a few cases rents had become unduly heavy owing to competition among the cultivators themselves and those of 734 holdings were reduced with the consent of the proprietors. The general enhancement of the payments of tenants was very lenient in view of a rise in prices of nearly 100 per cent, but this was intentional as the District had suffered from several poor years before revision of settlement was begun, and the famine of 1896-97 occurred while the operations were in progress. The tenant rate, which stood at R. 0-9-8 at the 30 years' settlement, was raised by the proprietors to R. 0-10-0 before revision, while the effect of revision was to increase it to R. 0-10-10 an acre. The area

held by tenants had increased from 400,000 to 659,000 acres during the period of settlement, while their payments had risen from Rs. 2·42 to Rs. 4·09 lakhs; they were increased at revision to Rs. 4·47 lakhs.

Home farm of the proprietors.

133. The home farm of the proprietors increased during the 30 years' settlement from 149,000 to 200,000 acres, covering the large proportion of 23 per cent of the occupied area. In the Chhapāra group of Lakhnādon tahsil the home farm was 38 per cent of the occupied area, in Dongaria 29, and in Sāgar 28. Most of the village proprietors belong as yet to the classes which cultivate their own land, and do not farm it out, and these are inclined to increase the extent of their own farms by the inclusion of land relinquished by tenants, when conveniently situated. The home farm was valued as a rule at the unit-rate imposed on tenants, but on account of its better quality the rate per acre worked out at R. 0-12-10 as against the average ryoti rate of R. 0-10-10. The Settlement Officer's valuation was, however, supported by the fact that tenants of *sīr* paid at the rate of R. 0-15-0 an acre for 12 per cent of the area, and that almost certainly not by any means the best land. The rental valuation of the home farm was Rs. 1·60 lakhs. Nearly 10,000 acres were held rent-free from the village proprietors as grants for special reasons or in lieu of service. This area was assessed to Rs. 7300 at the rate of R. 0-12-1 per acre.

Miscellaneous income.

134. The *siwai* or miscellaneous income was not important, and was taken to amount to Rs. 14,600, of which Rs. 11,300 were included in the assets for the purposes of assessment, a drawback of 22 per cent being allowed for fluctuations of seasons. The income is mainly derived from myrobalans, mahuā, timber and grass and the amount included in the assets fell at 10 pies per acre on the 426 square miles of mālguzāri forest area.

135. The following statement compares the assets taken at the 30 years' settlement with those calculated at the recent revision:—

Comparison of assets.

	At Settlement of 1864-65.	At Settlement of 1896—98 (as assessed).
	Rs.	Rs.
Mālik-makbūzas' payments and tenants' rental	2,46,000	4,52,000
Rental value of *sīr* and *khudkāsht* land ...	91,000	1,68,000
Miscellaneous income...	4,000	11,000
Total ...	3,41,000	6,31,000

The total assets as announced were Rs. 6·14 lakhs as against Rs. 6·31 lakhs as assessed, the decrease being due to the relinquishment of holdings in the famine of 1896-97. Compared with the previous settlement the assets showed an increase of Rs. 2·90 lakhs or 85 per cent.

Enhancement of the revenue.

136. In order to avoid an unduly large enhancement of the revenue and corresponding decrease in the proprietors' incomes, the ordinary maximum proportion of the assets to be taken as revenue was fixed by the Chief Commissioner at 47 per cent in the Seonī tahsīl and 40 per cent in the poorer area of the Lakhnādon tahsīl. The actual proportion of the assets taken on mālguzāri villages worked out to 49 in Seonī and 40 in Lakhnādon or 46 per cent for the District as a whole. But the villages of the Adegaon and Bhīmgarh estates, which had escheated to Government, had been settled with *thekādārs* or farmers at a much higher proportion of the assets than

that taken from village proprietors. Five other villages of the Lakhnādon tahsīl which had been relinquished by their proprietors at the previous settlement were in the same position. In these villages a proportion of 70 per cent of the assets was approved by the Chief Commissioner as the amount to be taken, and the payments actually fixed came to 69 per cent. The number of villages thus settled with *thekādārs* was 64, four which were relinquished at the time of announcement being settled ryotwāri. Combining the assessments of both mālguzāri and *thekādāri* villages, the revenue fell at 48 per cent of the assets or about the same as at the previous settlement. The revenue was raised to Rs. 2·93 lakhs, or by 78 per cent on the figure of Rs. 1·64 lakhs paid before revision, a small reduction being allowed for the decrease in assets between assessment and announcement. The proprietors were estimated tohave gained an increased income of Rs. 2·49 lakhs since the 30 years' settlement, and of this Rs. 1·31 lakhs were taken in revenue. The increase in the rental effected at settlement was Rs. 40,000 and the net decrease in the income of the proprietors was thus Rs. 90,000. Out of the revised revenue of Rs. 2·93 lakhs, Rs. 30,000 were assigned and the net revenue was therefore Rs. 2·63 lakhs. As the land revenue, though leniently assessed, often amounted to a considerable enhancement, in 289 villages out of a total of 974, the assessment was made progressive, that is a portion of it was remitted for periods varying from two to four years. The amount of revenue so relinquished was Rs. 34,000.

Incidence of the revenue and rental.

137. The incidence of the revenue per cultivated acre was R. 0-5-9 as against R. 0-4-9 at the previous settlement. The revenue ncidence per cultivated acre varied from R. 0-9-4 in the Havelī group of Seonī tahsil to R. 0-3-2 in the Dhūma group of Lakhnādon, while the rental incidence varied from R. 0-15-9 to R. 0-6-6 in the same groups, the average being R. 0-10-10.

Period and cost of the settlement.

138. The new settlement came into force from 1897 in the Seonī tahsīl[1] and 1898 in the Lakhnādon tahsīl and was made for a period of 11 and 12 years. It expires in 1908 in the Seonī tahsīl and in 1909 in the Lakhnādon tahsīl. Under the recent orders of the Government of India the settlement has been extended to the normal period of 20 years and will expire in 1916-1917. Excluding the preliminary traverse survey the total cost of the settlement was Rs. 2·31 lakhs or a little more than Rs. 90 per square mile. The settlement was the last effected by Khān Bahādur Aulād Husain, a distinguished Officer of the Department in these Provinces, whose services had extended over more than 50 years.

Abatements of revenue.

139. Owing to the deterioration caused by the famine of 1900 and the poor crops of subsequent years in the rice tracts of Ugli and Barghāt and in the Dhūma circle of the Lakhnādon tahsīl, small temporary abatements of revenue were granted in a number of villages, being calculated on the decline in the cropped area, making a double allowance for the most valuable crop. These amounted in 1901-02 to Rs. 20,000, in 1902-03 to Rs. 9500 and in 1903-04 to Rs. 7400. Remissions of revenue have also been made in years of famine, but except for this the settlement has successfully survived the ordeal of the series of failures of the harvest, which followed its introduction.

Ryotwāri settlement.

140. Concurrently with the regular revision, the Settlement Officer dealt with 186 blocks covering 180 square miles of land, which were to be settled on the ryotwāri system. Of these 155 were formed by excision from Government forest, and the remainder used to form part of the Adegaon and Bhīmgarh estates, which escheated to Government on failure of heirs. The bulk of the blocks were settled as villages with

[1] Except in two groups where it was introduced from 1896.

managing patels, receiving a commission of two annas in the rupee on collections when the total demand of the village amounted to Rs. 300 or more, and of two and a half annas when it fell short of this amount. Two villages were settled with *watandāri* or hereditary patels receiving, on account of improvements effected, a commission of three and a half annas in the rupee; and six under the special rules providing terms of exemption for improvements as an inducement to the construction of tanks for rice cultivation.[1] Some of the villages seem to have been subsequently abandoned, and in 1905 there were 165 in existence, 127 in the Lakhnādon tahsil and 38 in the Seonī tahsil; of 32 more villages, 28 were out of cultivation and in 4 arrangements for assessment were in progress. The amounts of land revenue and cesses realised from these villages in 1904-05 were Rs. 19,000 and Rs. 2600 respectively. The assessment was made on the same system as in the mālguzāri area, but the revenue fell at only R. 0-5-1 an acre as against R. 0-10-10 in mālguzāri villages, because the soil was inferior in quality and the villages generally more remote from trade centres. In 1904-05, 77,000 acres were included in holdings in ryotwāri villages, of which 37,000 were under cultivation. During the last three years (ending 1905) a sum of Rs. 9000 has been expended on the construction of wells in nearly 40 villages.

Special tenures.

141. The District has no jāgīr or zamīndāri estates. Ten villages, eight in the Seonī and two in the Lakhnādon tahsīl, with a total area of 6800 acres, have been sold outright under the Waste Land Rules, the amount realised being Rs. 23,000. These are free from payment of land revenue, but cesses are due from them. Superior and inferior proprietors coexist in 95 villages, 47 in the Seonī and 48 in the Lakhnādon tahsil, principally belonging to the estates of the larger landowners The settlement was made in all these cases with the superior

[1] See Settlement Report (1900), para. 91.

proprietor. Protected status was awarded to 24 *thekādārs* or farmers at the last settlement and occupancy rights in *sīr* land were conferred on 48 others. Applications for protected status are infrequent. The District has six forest villages containing an area of 500 acres allotted for cultivation. These villages are under the management of the Forest Department, and their object is to secure a supply of labour in localities where it is required by the Department. The patches of sandy soil in the beds of rivers, on which melons and vegetables are grown by Dhīmars and Kahārs were not assessed at the 30 years' settlement and were subsequently made over to the District Fund for management; they were afterwards declared to be *nazūl* or Government property. Some trouble was experienced in collecting rents for them as the patches of cultivation changed annually, and in 1903 it was decided that the melon beds of the two navigable rivers, the Waingangā and Nerbudda, should be retained as Government property, and the remainder handed over to the village proprietors to be assessed at the next settlement.

Revenue-free and quit-rent grants.

142. Nearly 152,000 acres consisting of villages or shares of villages and 140 acres included in holdings were held wholly or partially revenue-free in 1904-05, the amount of revenue so assigned being Rs. 28,000. Since the settlement the amount of assigned revenue has been reduced from Rs. 30,000 by resumptions. Formerly two large estates were held on quit-rent, the Gondī tāluk (in the Seonī tahsīl) comprising 89 villages, and the Kedārpur tāluk (in the Lakhnādon tahsīl) containing 72 villages. The former belonged to Dīwān Najāf Khān, the father of the present Dīwān Muhammad Alī Khān, and the latter to Wāris Muhammad Khān. Both these tālukdārs were the descendants of the old Dīwān family of Seonī. In the Gondī tāluk, the quit-rent was fixed at Rs. 500 per annum for the lifetime of Dīwān Najāf Khān, the *ubārīdār*, while in the Kedārpur tāluk it was fixed at half the amount assessed as *kāmil* (full)

jamā for the lifetime of the *ubārīdār*. Subsequently to the last 30 years' settlement, the amount of the quit-rent in the Gondī tāluk was, on the death of the former holder, raised from Rs. 500 to Rs. 1000, the latter sum to continue for the lifetime of the late holder, Dīwān Muhammad Alī Khān who died in 1906. In the Kedārpur tāluk, the grant was resumed in November 1884, on the death of Wāris Muhammad Khān, and the estate is now held on the ordinary mālguzāri tenure. Of the eight villages included in the Khamaria tāluk originally held revenue-free by Daryaogir Gosain, three were resumed during the currency of settlement, and the remaining five are still revenue-free for the upkeep of a Hindu temple situated at Palurā in the Nāgpur District. The grant appears to have been originally conferred by the Gond Rājā Bakht Buland and afterwards respected by the Bhonslas; it was ultimately confirmed by the British Government to the Mahant of the temple under the original terms of the grant, *i.e.*, the observation of religious ceremonies and the upkeep of the temple. There are also four other villages held free of revenue, three for the support of a Muhammadan shrine situated in Ziārat near Seonī, and one for the support of a tomb in Chhapāra. These are old grants of Bakht Buland and his successor Chānd Sultān, and having been respected by the Nāgpur Rājās were confirmed by the British Government. Another tāluk known as the Bībī jāgīr, consisting of seven villages, is held on revenue-free tenure by Musammats Ratan Kuwar and Sujān Kuwar, who belong to the old Deogarh family of the Chhindwāra District. At last settlement this jāgīr was included in that District, but it was subsequently transferred to the Seonī District. The *muāfi* tenure is to continue during the lifetime of the present holders, and after their death the jāgīr will be settled on their heirs on a quit-rent tenure of one-fourth of the full assessment in perpetuity.

Statistics of tenures.

143. The total area included in holdings in 1904-05 was 923,000 acres in the mālguzāri and 67,000 in the ryotwāri area or a total

of nearly a million. The mālguzāri land was distributed as follows. An area of 134,000 acres or 15 per cent of the total consisted of *sīr* land and 86,000 acres or 9 per cent of *khudkāsht* land. *Mālik-makbūzas* held only 8000 acres or under 1 per cent of the total area, absolute occupancy tenants 43,000 acres or 5 per cent, occupancy tenants 161,000 acre or 17 per cent, and ordinary tenants 481,000 acres or 52 per cent, while 9000 acres were held rent-free from the proprietors or in lieu of service. Since the settlement the area held by absolute occupancy tenants has decreased by 5000 acres and that belonging to occupancy tenants by 46,000, while ordinary tenants have increased their holding by 77,000 acres. A substantial area of land held in the superior classes of tenant right has thus been relinquished during the bad seasons. More than 34,000 acres were sublet in 1904-05 at the average rate of R. 0-13-3 an acre as against the rate of R. 0-15-0 recorded at last settlement.

Cesses.

144. The demand on account of the road, school and postal cesses for 1904-05 was Rs. 17,000, for additional rates Rs. 6000 and for patwāri cess Rs. 17,000. The last two cesses have now been abolished and substantial relief has thus been afforded to the agricultural community. The road cess is calculated at 3 per cent on the land revenue, the education cess at 2 per cent and the postal cess at ½ per cent. The appropriation made from District funds for District postal charges has now been discontinued. The tenants pay a contribution of from 3 pies to one anna in the rupee of rental to the kotwār.

CHAPTER IX.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION.[1]

District Subdivisions and Staff.

145. At the 30 years' settlement in 1867 the Seonī District consisted of three Subdivisions or tahsīls, Seonī, Lakhnādon and Katangī, but in 1872 a number of changes were made in the boundaries of the District. A tract of 51 villages below the Kurai Ghāt on the southern border were transferred from Seonī to the Rāmtek tahsīl in the Nāgpur District; the whole of the Katangī tahsīl with the exception of 58 villages was transferred to the Bālāghāt District; 32 villages from the eastern portion of the Chhindwāra District were added to the Seonī tahsīl and 98 villages to the Lakhnādon tahsīl, 8 being transferred from Mandlā and 90 of the old Adegaon tāluka from the western portion of Chhindwāra District. When the above changes were made the existing tahsīls of Seonī and Lakhnādon were constituted. The old system of tālukas which existed in 1867 is not now maintained, but they are still known among the villagers. The head of the District is the Deputy Commissioner, who is also District Magistrate. He has two Executive Assistants at headquarters besides a tahsīldār and a naib-tahsīldār for each of the two tahsīls. The civil staff consists of a District Judge, a Subordinate Judge and a munsiff at each tahsīl. One of the two Executive Assistants and the tahsīldārs of both tahsīls have civil powers and are designated as Additional Judges to the courts of the Sub-Judge and munsiffs respectively. The District usually has a commissioned Medical Officer, a District Superintendent of Police, a Forest Divisional Officer and a Subdivisional Officer of the Public Works Department. There is one bench of Honorary Magistrates in Seonī town. The Divisional and Sessions

[1] This chapter has been furnished by Mr. R. B. Chapman, Deputy Commissioner

Judge of Jubbulpore Division has superior civil and criminal jurisdiction.

146. The Land Record Staff consists of one District and one Assistant Superintendent of Land Records, 8 Revenue Inspectors, 156 patwāris and one clerk. The headquarters of the Revenue Inspectors are at Bandol, Kanhiwāra, Barghāt and Kurai in the Seonī tahsīl, and Sunwāra, Dhūma, Chhapāra and Ghansor in Lakhnādon. Seonī tahsīl has been subdivided into 81 patwāri's circles with an average of 9 villages to the circle and an area of 15 square miles. Lakhnādon tahsīl contains 75 circles, and each circle contains on an average 12 villages and has an area of 17 square miles. The remuneration of the patwāris ranges between Rs. 100 and Rs. 135 per annum, but ten men receive personal allowances in addition, varying between Rs. 25 and Rs. 65. These allowances were granted at last settlement in order to compensate certain patwāris for the loss in their emoluments brought about by the fixation of a maximum salary of Rs. 135 per annum. The allowances cease on the death or dismissal of the present incumbent of the post. No service land is held by patwāris, nor have any received permission to engage in cultivation. Consequent on the abolition of the patwāri cess with effect from 1st April 1906, the entire cost of the Land Record Staff, amounting to Rs. 26,400, will be borne in future by Government. The patwāri cess hitherto levied for payment of the staff amounted to Rs. 25,800, of which Rs. 17,000 were paid into the treasury by mālguzārs and by tenants of ryotwāri villages and the balance of Rs. 8800 payable by tenants of mālguzāri villages, was collected by the patwāris themselves. In cases where these collections fell short of the sanctioned remuneration of the circle the balance was paid from the amount deposited in the treasury. Patwāri cess was levied at the following rates:—

Land Record Staff.

From mālguzārs, 5½ per cent on the revenue demand of the village.

From tenants of ryotwāri villages, 1 anna per rupee of rental.

From tenants of the mālguzāri villages, 4½ pies per rupee of rental.

The principal castes of patwāris are Kāyasths, Brāhmans and Muhammadans. Hardworking and intelligent as a rule, the patwāris perform their multifarious duties in a creditable manner, and are rightly considered a very useful body of men.

Litigation and crime.

147. The figures for the last 16 years show that the people of this District are not particularly litigious. Suits of a speculative nature are rare. The bulk of the litigation is extremely simple, being based on money and grain bonds usually carrying a high rate of interest. Many Kābulis have settled in the District and make a living by lending small sums to the poorer classes. Mortgages by conditional sale find favour with the larger moneylenders as the best form of security for their capital. Since the arrival of the railway there has been a marked decrease in the rate of interest charged upon such loans and many old mortgage debts carrying as much as 24 per cent interest have been paid off by raising loans at 9 and 6 per cent. In the early years of the decade 1890—1900 the number of civil suits averaged between 3000 and 2700. An appreciable decline in the years 1899 to 1901 was the result of famine, but in subsequent years litigation has returned to a normal standard, with some increase in the number of title suits. The number of tenancy suits during the last ten years has remained at a fairly constant average of about 325. Crime in this District has seldom been of a serious nature, but the railway lately opened is beginning to bring in undesirable characters. The crimes commonly met with are house-breaking and cattle theft; the average number of cases of these for the ten years from 1890 to 1900 comes to 356 and 120 per annum respectively, but in recent years there has been a satisfactory decline. Defamation cases in

connection with accusations relating to caste rules are very common.

Statistics of revenue.

148. The following statement shows the realisations of revenue in the District under the principal heads of receipt, at the end of the last three decades and during the years 1902-03, 1903-04, and 1904-05 :—

Year.	Land revenue.	Cesses.	Forests.	Excise.	Stamps.	Registration.	Income-tax.	Other receipts.	TOTAL.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1880-81	1,54,000	17,000	69,000	81,000	24,000	1,000	...	17,000	3,63,000
1890-91	1,64,000	29,000	81,000	1,22,000	42,000	2,000	7,000	19,000	4,66,000
1900-01	2,83,000	21,000	42,000	64,000	36,000	2,000	8,000	14,000	4,70,000
1902-03	2,52,000	36,000	55,000	94,000	45,000	3,000	8,000	14,000	5,07,000
1903-04	2,77,000	39,000	63,000	1,00,000	41,000	3,000	6,000	10,000	5,42,000
1904-05	2,79,000	38,000	68,000	1,03,000	44,000	3,000	6,000	9,000	5,50,000

Excise. Country liquor.

149. The systems in vogue for the supply of country liquor in the District, to the end of the financial year 1905-06, were (1) the sadar distillery system, and (2) the outstill system. There was one sadar distillery at the District headquarters which served the bulk of the Seonī tahsīl, while the remainder of the District was supplied by 70 outstills. From the current year (1906-07) the new contract distillery system has been introduced, but some of the hilly tracts with poor communications are still supplied by 22 outstills. In proportion to its area and population the number of shops for the sale of country liquor in the District prior to the introduction of the new system was almost the largest in the Province, but it has been considerably decreased under the new arrangement. The excise revenue of the District in 1904-05, amounting to Rs. 46,000, was the lowest but four in the Province; the

incidence per head of population being 2 annas 3 pies as against the Provincial figure of 3 annas 7 pies. *Tāri* and *pachwai* are not consumed in the District and the demand for foreign liquor is very small.

Opium and Gānja.

150. The revenue from opium and *gānja* during the year 1904-05 was Rs. 57,000, the incidence per head of population being two annas nine pies as against the Provincial figure of two annas one pie. Revenue under these heads, though it has fluctuated during the last decade, shows a steady upward tendency. In 1904-05 there were 38 permanent opium and 40 *gānja* shops in the District. The number of opium shops has since been reduced to 31 or one for every 103 square miles and 11,000 persons. The number of *gānja* shops remains unchanged. Only one shop is licensed for the sale of *bhāng*.

Registration.

151. There are 3 registration offices, the District Registrar's office and sub-registrar's at head quarters and one sub-registrar's office at Lakhnādon. Both the latter are in charge of special salaried sub-registrars. The average annual receipts from registration for the past sixteen years were Rs. 3000. The provisions of the new Tenancy Act imposing restrictions upon the transfer of immoveable property have reduced the receipts. The only classes of documents generally registered in this District are sale-deeds and mortgages of immoveable property.

District Council and Local Boards.

152. The Seonī District Council and the Seonī and Lakhnādon Local Boards came into existence on the 18th January 1890. Prior to this there was one Local Board for the whole District dating from April 25th, 1884. The constitution of the District Council and Local Boards is as under:—

	Elected members.	Nominated members.
District Council	11	5
Seonī Local Board ...	12	6
Lakhnādon do. do. ...	14	4

The members of the District Council and Local Boards are mostly non-officials. The tahsīldār and naib-tahsīldār are members of the Local Boards, and an Extra Assistant Commissioner is on the District Council. The income from bazar dues is peculiar to this District and the justification for the levy of such dues lies only in the acquiescence of the people, in long-continued practice and in the fact that the District Council spends a major portion of such income on bazar improvements and in adopting measures tending to promote the comfort and convenience of people frequenting the bazars. Recently the Government have transferred the income from the postal cess to the District funds. The income of the District Council exclusive of debt heads rose from Rs. 25,000 in 1896-97 to Rs. 49,000 in 1905-06. A total of 54 primary schools, 2 middle schools, 3 *sarais*, 7 bazars, 4 roadside avenues, 27 pounds and one veterinary dispensary are under the management of the District Council. Besides the above the District Council helps to maintain 3 branch dispensaries at Lakhnādon, Chhapāra and Keolāri in the interior of the District.

Municipalities.

153. Seonī is the only municipal town in the District. The municipality was created in 1867. The town consists of 5 wards, each ward electing 2 members. There are also six nominated members. The average income of the municipality for the decade ending 31st March 1906 was Rs. 34,000. Octroi is the main source of income. The population within municipal limits is 11,864 persons and the average income per head Rs. 2-14-0. General administration, water-supply, conservancy and education are the principal heads of expenditure. Seonī has for the last 30 years been supplied with water from the Babaria tank situated about 2 miles to the north of the town. The water used to be brought in an open channel. It was decided to devote the greater portion of the local Victoria Memorial Fund to converting this open channel into a regular system of supply by pipe. Rupees 10,000 were

provided from the fund, and grants amounting to Rs. 10,500 have been received from Provincial revenues. The municipality contributed Rs. 37,000, of which Rs. 11,000 were obtained on loan. The total cost of the work will be Rs. 58,000. An ornamental garden has also been constructed in connection with the waterworks and paid for partly out of the Victoria Memorial Fund.

Village Sanitation.

154. The Village Sanitation Act is not now in force in any village of the District, having been withdrawn from Lakhnādon in 1903, since when the provisions of section 141 of the Land Revenue Act have been applied to this village. A sum of about Rs. 1000 is now raised annually and expended on sanitation. Keolāri is also under the Mukaddam Rules and the receipts amount to about Rs. 200.

Public Works.

155. The District is in charge of a Subdivisional Officer of the Public Works Department and is included in the Jubbulpore division. Almost all the roads are under the Public Works Department. The value of the civil buildings in the District is about Rs. 2,50,000 and the annual maintenance charges amount to Rs. 3000. The District court house is said to have been built about 50 years ago at a cost of Rs. 32,000 and the jail about the same time for about a lakh. The police lines were improved in 1894, at a cost of Rs. 45,000. A new forest office was built in 1904-05. Seonī possesses a handsome little church, constructed in 1870 at a cost of Rs. 10,000. The municipal waterworks will, it is hoped, be completed before the end of the year. The work, which consists of pipe connections between the town and the Babaria tank at a distance of two miles will cost about Rs. 58,000. A good veterinary dispensary has also lately been constructed in Seonī. A very fine high school and boarding house have been built by the Church of Scotland Mission, Rs. 26,500 being provided from Mission funds, and Rs. 12,000 contributed from Provincial and local funds.

Police.

156. The police force consists of 53 officers and 220 men, having been slightly reduced on two or three occasions since 1890. There is no special railway police. The District contains 7 Station-houses and 13 outposts. The Station-houses are at Seonī, Kālborī, Barghāt, Keolāri, Ghansor, Lakhnādon and Chhapāra. The suggestions of the Police Commission to do away with outposts entirely are still under consideration. Under the new system it has been proposed to divide the District into 14 Station-house circles only. Each of the existing Station-houses is divided into beats, two constables being appointed to each beat. Preference in recruiting is given to up-country men as being stronger and having special aptitude for outdoor duties; Brāhmans and Muhammadans are the principal classes recruited.

Kotwārs.

157. At Khān Bahādur Aulād Husain's settlement, the District comprised 1457 mālguzāri and thekādāri villages for which 1238 kotwārs or village watchmen were appointed. The remuneration of 459 kotwārs was fixed in cash while 779 were ordered to be paid in kind. Remuneration in cash and kind is levied in mālguzāri villages direct by the kotwār from the mālguzārs and tenants at rates bearing the same proportion to the rental value of the land cultivated. The average amount of cash remuneration received by kotwārs in mālguzāri villages is Rs. 47 per year. In villages in which the remuneration is paid in kind, the average receipts of the kotwār amount to 12 maunds 8 seers of spring grain. The ryotwāri village dues from tenants are supplemented by cash payments from Government. In 56 ryotwāri villages 45 kotwārs receive allowances aggregating Rs. 319. The kotwārs generally belong to the Mehrā, Katia and Pankā castes.

Jail.

158. Seonī has a fourth-class District jail with accommodation for 142 prisoners, including 16 female prisoners. The daily average of prisoners in the last four years has been, *1901*, 60; *1902*, 43;

1903, 46; and *1904*, 52. The annual cost of maintenance per head averages Rs. 117. The recognised industries of the jail are aloe-pounding and stone-breaking. Broken metal finds a ready sale locally, and the aloe fibre is sold to a Calcutta firm. The profits on manufactures in 1904 were Rs. 500.

159. The first Government schools in Seonī were opened in 1863. From 1864 to 1867 the number of schools rose from 44 to 71 and the number of scholars from 985 to 1839. In 1867 a demand for English education resulted in the transformation of the vernacular school at Seonī into an English middle school. In 1875 the District was attached to the Southern or Nāgpur Inspection Circle, but with the formation of a fourth Circle at Hoshangābād in 1905, Seonī was transferred to Jubbulpore. From 1867 to 1870 the improvement in education was very marked. Schools rose from 57 to 85 and the number of scholars from 1310 to 2114. The girls' school at Seonī was opened in 1868 with 50 pupils, and those at Chhapāra, Lakhnādon, and Dhūma were opened a year afterwards. Seth Rūpchand, an influential proprietor of Seonī, received a gold watch and a seat in Darbār from the Chief Commissioner, Sir Richard Temple, in recognition of his services in the cause of education. In 1878, the original Secession Church of Scotland Mission opened an Anglo-vernacular school at Seonī. The school rapidly improved and was made into a high school in 1901. It has a branch at Chhapāra. From 1885 the management of schools both for boys and girls was handed over to the District Council. The combined system, according to which the teachers receive a fixed monthly salary of Rs. 5 to 6 supplemented by a grant depending upon the results of certain examinations, was found to be a failure and in 1902 all the combined schools were converted into fixed pay Board Schools. In 1903 the girls' schools at Seonī, Chhapāra, Lakhnādon, Adegaon, and Dhūma were made Government

Education.

institutions. A Government girls' school at Keolāri was opened in 1905 The total number of schools and scholars and the annual expenditure in different years are given below:—

Year.	No. of schools.	No. of scholars	Expenditure.
			Rs.
1890-91	50	2564	13,000
1894-95	65	3554	21,000
1900-01	62	3420	22,000
1905-06	65	4627	32,000

The progress of education was much retarded by the famines of 1896 and 1900. In 1905-06 out of 4627 children, 38 were in the high school, 137 in English middle schools, and the remainder in vernacular middle or primary schools. The proportion of boys in receipt of instruction to those of school-going age was 9. The seven girls' schools contained 391 pupils. In 1901 the proportion of male literates per 1000 of population was 43, the District standing eleventh in the Province in this respect. The average expenditure for each child was Rs. 7 annually in 1905-06.

Dispensaries.

160. There are four public dispensaries at Seonī, Lakhnādon, Keolāri and Chhapāra. Seonī has also a police hospital and the Church of Scotland Mission maintains a dispensary in the town mainly for women and children, in charge of a qualified lady doctor. The Bengal-Nāgpur Railway have two dispensaries in the District, one at Seonī and the other at Ghansor. The public dispensaries have accommodation for 46 in-patients, and the police hospital can accommodate 12 in-patients The daily average number of indoor patients at the public dispensaries during the decade ending 1905 was 11 and that of outdoor patients 154. The income of

the public dispensaries in 1905 was Rs. 17,000, of which the greater part was provided from Provincial and local funds.

Vaccination.

161. Vaccination is compulsory only in the municipal town of Seonī, but is carried on all over the District in the cold season. Taking the District as a whole some 24,000 persons were vaccinated in 1905-06, the cost per successful case being R. 0-1-5. Over 88 per cent of the children born and surviving to one year of age were vaccinated in this year. The staff employed in 1905-06 consisted of 9 vaccinators and one apprentice vaccinator and the cost of the operations was Rs. 2000.

Veterinary Dispensary.

162. The Veterinary dispensary is located in a very fine and spacious building on the side of the Great Northern Road between the railway station and town of Seonī. Two Veterinary Assistants are attached to the dispensary, one of whom is constantly on tour in the interior. The number of animals treated has risen from 363 in 1902 to 1538 in 1905.

APPENDIX.

GAZETTEER OF TAHSILS, TOWNS, IMPORTANT VILLAGES, RIVERS AND HILLS.

APPENDIX.

GAZETTEER OF TAHSILS, TOWNS, IMPORTANT VILLAGES, RIVERS AND HILLS.

Adegaon.—A large village in the Lakhnādon tahsil, 29 miles north of Seonī and 8 miles west of Lakhnādon. Its area is 2200 acres and the population in 1901 was more than 1300 persons, having increased by about 100 during the preceding decade. The village contains the ruins of a small fort built by Kharak Bhārti Gosain, inside which is a temple of Bhairava. There are a number of custard-apple trees in the vicinity. Cloth is woven and dyed with madder and myrobalans in the green colour known as *amowā* and several Nemā Baniās deal in cloth and thread. The village contains a police outpost, a post office, forest post, a primary school for boys and a girls' school. It is held by a Brāhman *thekādār* or farmer. Adegaon was the chief village of the Adegaon jāgir or Chaurāsi which originally belonged to the ancestor of the present jāgīrdār of Harrai in Chhindwāra, a relative of the Gond-Muhammadan ruling family of Deogarh. After the Marāthā conquest the estate was confiscated for non-payment of revenue, and the family were awarded a grant of seven villages free of revenue which are still held by their descendants and are known as the Bibī jāgīr. Adegaon was made over to one Kharak Bhārti, a Gosain from Benāres, who was subsequently appointed Sūbah of Seonī by Raghujī Bhonsla. Kharak Bhārti died in 1819 and was succeeded by his *chelā* or disciple, and the estate passed in the same manner through various hands. In 1872, however, the property having been awarded to one Dhokal Bhārti, another claimant Rām Bhārti brought a suit for its possession and got a decree from the Deputy Commissioner in 1873. Shortly afterwards Rām Bhārti was murdered in the well of the Dīwān's house at

Seonī, the murderers being two dependants of Dhokal Bhārti who were subsequently tried and convicted. The estate was then declared to have lapsed to Government and the villages were settled with *thekādārs* or farmers.

Ari.—An important village situated 16½ miles to the south-east of Seonī on the Katangī road. It has an area of 2500 acres and a population of nearly 1200 persons both in 1891 and 1901. A police outpost, post office and primary school are located here and an inspection bungalow has been constructed. A weekly market is held on Sundays. The proprietor is a Muhammadan.

Ashta.—A village in the Seonī tahsīl, 22 miles south-east of Seonī and 10 miles from Barghāt, with which it is connected by a village road. The population in 1901 was under 1900 persons as against over 1300 in 1891. The village contains three old temples built by stones joined by iron clamps and cemented with lead. The temples are of the kind called Hemādpanthī and the following story is related about them. Hemādpanth was a magician who by his art cured a king of Ceylon of a dangerous illness. But Hemādpanth's mother had died in giving birth to him, and he could only expiate this sin by building 25,000 temples in one night. So the king of Ceylon, who had some influence with the heavenly powers, out of gratitude to Hemādpanth induced the sun and moon to stand still for six months; during this period therefore there was continual night, and Hemādpanth got all the temples built while it lasted. Hemādpanth is also said to have invented the *modī* character for Marāthī. Two of the temples are still in good condition and one of them has a defaced inscription. The village contains some tanks which are used for irrigation, and vegetables are grown by a number of Marārs. A weekly market is held on Tuesdays. Ashtā has a post office and primary school. The proprietor is Khān Sāhib Abdul Rahmān.

Barghat.—A village in the Seonī tahsīl, 14 miles east of Seonī on the Bālāghāt road. Its area is nearly 1800

acres and the population in 1901 was 1200 persons as against more than 1300 in 1891. Barghāt has the most important bazar in the District, held on Saturdays, for which a covered market-place has been erected. The commodity principally sold is rice and purchasers come from surrounding Districts to obtain it here and carry it for long distances in carts. The right of levying fees at the bazar is leased to a contractor for a sum varying between Rs. 2000 and Rs. 3000 annually. Cattle and clothes are also brought for sale. The residents of the village are mainly Ponwārs and Gonds and there is also a colony of Katia and Mehrā weavers who produce coarse country cloth. The village has a vernacular middle school with 133 pupils enrolled in 1905, and a police Station-house and post office. An inspection bungalow has been erected. The proprietor is a Pathān.

Bawanthari River.—A river which rises in the Sātpurā plateau and after draining the south of the Seonī tahsīl passes into Bhandāra to join the Waingangā. While in the hills it is a comparatively unimportant stream, but on reaching the plains is joined by converging rivulets flowing down the southern edge of the plateau and attains to not unimportant dimensions. The name has been held to signify 'Fifty-two streams'. Until it reaches the plains its course lies through dense forest. The bed of the river is generally sandy and one writer says 'In the Bāwanthari you may walk for miles along the bed without a sight of water, but you will get it almost anywhere by digging. It seems to flow under the sand'. The total length of the river is 57 miles.

Bhaironthan.—A small village in the Lakhnādon tahsīl, 8 miles north of Lakhnādon. The name signifies 'The abode of the God Bhairava'. There is a cave in the village containing an image of Siva or Mahādeo with a small pool of water in front of it. The entrance to the cave is precipitous. A small religious fair is held here on the day of Shivrātri in February and is attended by the residents of the surrounding villages. The cave is known as Mathghogrā

and this is the name given to the fair. The proprietor of the village is a Kāyasth.

Bhimgarh.—A village in Lakhnādon tahsīl, 12 miles from Ghansor of Seonī tahsil. Bhimgarh is the headquarters of the estate of that name consisting of 15 villages. The estate was formerly held by the proprietor of Adegaon, and in the litigation between Rām Bhārti and Dhokal Bhārti in 1873, was awarded to Dhokal Bhārti for his maintenance by the civil court on his losing possession of Adegaon. On Dhokal Bhārti's death in 1884 the estate escheated to Government. It is now being settled on the ryotwāri system. On a hill near it there are the remains of a large number of statues of rude construction representing horse and foot soldiers. The local story is that these belonged to the army of one Gangjī Rājā and were all turned into stone. There are ruins of fortifications on the eastern and western sides of the hill.

Bijna River.—A river which rises in the Chhindwāra District and flows in an easterly direction through the Lakhnādon tahsīl, joining the Waingangā a few miles north-east of Chhapāra. It crosses the Jubbulpore road near Gangāwāri.

Bisapur.—A small village in the Seonī tahsīl, 20 miles to the south-east of Seonī in the Kurai tract. The village contains an old temple, which is said to have been built by Palai Rānī widow of a Gond Rājā Bhopat. The story goes that the Gond chief was killed in battle by one of Aurangzeb's generals, who fell in love with the widowed queen and tried to force her to marry him. But she asked for three days' delay and during this time she went and built this temple, and placed statues of her husband and herself in it and on the third day she killed herself beside it. Near the spot where she died, a *palās* tree (*Butea frondosa*) grew up and it bore and continues to bear white flowers.

Chaonri.—A village in the Seonī tahsil, 6 miles to the south-west of Seonī with a population of about 1000 persons. Chaonrī was formerly a place of considerable importance and

was the headquarters of the local governor until Ram Singh, the relative of Bakht Buland, established himself at Chhapāra in 1703. The Parwār Baniās still remember Chaonrī as their original headquarters and the place from which they migrated to Seonī. There are the ruins of an old Jain temple. Chaonrī is described as a pleasant spot for picnics in the cold weather, having a magnificent grove of mango trees, a fine old tank, pretty rides in the vicinity and game for the sportsman within easy reach. The tank swarms with the little Indian grebe called *pan-dubbī*. Glass bangles are made here of various colours and inlaid with tinsel. A weekly market is held on Thursdays, and the village contains a primary school and a forest post. The proprietor is a Bāgri Rājput.

Historical notice.

Chhapara (also known as *Dongrī Chhapāra*).—A large village in the Lakhnādon tahsīl, 21 miles north of Seonī on the Jubbulpore road and 17 miles south of Lakhnādon. The village stands at the junction of the Waingangā river with the small stream of the Motināla, so called, it is said, because pearls were formerly found in it. Its area is nearly 1400 acres and the population in 1901 was 3884 as against 3450 in 1891. The village has a picturesque situation on the river, whose banks are here rocky and steep. A fine bridge was constructed over the river by the orders of Sir Richard Temple in 1865. The bridge contains 12 spans of 50 feet each. The name of the village means *chha pāra* or six hamlets. Of these four, Dongaria, Sanīchari, Dilāwarganj and Gopālgānj, are now distinguished. Chhapāra is said to have been founded by Rām Singh, a relative of Bakht Buland of Deogarh, who was out hunting in the vicinity when a hare turned and fought with his dogs. He concluded that a place in which an animal ordinarily timid displayed such courage, should prove a nursery of brave men and removed his headquarters here. He built a fort which was partly destroyed at the time of the Mutiny. The fort is square, with towers at each corner, and a

large gateway in the eastern face. The southern face overhangs the Waingangā, and the western the small Motīnāla stream. At the beginning of the 19th century Chhapāra is said to have been a large and flourishing town with 2000 Pathān fighting men. But it was twice sacked by the Pindāris, on one occasion when the garrison was absent in Nāgpur, attending on the governor for the Diwāli festival. The Pindāris are said to have obtained so much gold from Chhapāra that they did not care to carry away anything else. A small mound near the Waingangā bridge still marks the site where 40,000 persons are said to have been buried in a common grave [1]. There are some Hindu and Jain temples here of recent construction. The headquarters of the District were removed to Seonī in 1774 under the Marāthās, but for some time after the cession the headquarters of the northern tahsīl of the District were located in the fort at Chhapāra.

Trade and local institutions.

The village is increasing in population, though the number of Muhammadan residents is not so large as formerly. A colony of Parwār Baniās reside here. Chhapāra is now best known as the site of an important cattle-fair which is held here during the month of Māgh (January-February) lasting for about six weeks. Persons attending the fair bathe in the Waingangā. Large numbers of old and worn-out cattle are brought to the fair and sold for slaughter. Agricultural implements, country carts and other articles are also sold, a number of temporary shops being opened. A small tax is levied on registered sales and out of the proceeds sanitary arrangements are made and a local agricultural show is held at which prizes are awarded. Chhapāra has a considerable trade in cotton, grain and hemp and it is proposed to erect a ginning factory here. Gram is the most important item of the traffic in corn. There is a local hand-weaving and dyeing industry and gold and silver ornaments and glass bangles are

[1] According to another account the 40,000 perished in a battle between the rulers of Seonī and Mandlā.

made here. A smooth greyish-white chalk is found on the north bank of the Waingangā. The village contains some fine groves of mangoes. It has a primary school for boys and a girls' school, a police Station-house, a post and telegraph office and forest post. A dâk bungalow is maintained and there is a *sarai* for native travellers. A weekly market is held on Saturdays. The proprietor is a Kāyasth.

Chirchira.—A small village in the Seonī tahsīl, about 30 miles north-east of Seonī, and situated on the Waingangā at the crossing called Kothīghāt, five miles from Keolāri. The river here has a small fall and the black rocks have been worn by the action of the water into curious shapes. A local fair is held on the last day of Kārtik (October-November), and is attended by the residents of the surrounding villages, a few temporary shops being opened. The proprietor of the village is a Muhammadan.

Dhuma.—A village in the Lakhnādon tahsil, 13 miles north of Lakhnādon on the Jubbulpore road and 34 miles from Jubbulpore. Dhūma has an elevation of 1800 feet. The population was 1000 in 1901 as against nearly 1300 in 1891. Dhūma is the headquarters of an old Raj-Gond family with a considerable estate, the present representative being Thākur Latkan Singh. The Dhūma Thākur is said to have been on the verge of revolt in 1857, but to have been restrained and kept to his obedience by the personal influence of Captain (afterwards Colonel) Thomson, the Deputy Commissioner. Some rebels from Jubbulpore and Narsinghpur established themselves in the hills near here and for some time practically closed the road to travellers. They were surprised and dispersed at the end of 1857. The village has some old temples and a tank which was repaired in the famine of 1897. There is some trade in grain and a weekly market is held on Thursdays. Sugarcane of a superior quality is grown here. Dhūma has a primary school, a police outpost, a forest post, and a post office. There is an encamping ground and a dâk bungalow is maintained.

Dighori.—A small village, 25 miles north-west of Seonī on the Thel river. A cave here opens into the bed of the river, and some sculptures have been carved on the walls of its interior. It is a favourite place of worship for the Gonds. The river here contains large fish and the worshippers catch them, the local legend being to the effect that some of the fish have a gold ring in their mouths.

Ghansor.—A small village in the Seonī tahsīl, 30 miles north-east of Seonī and 6 miles from Keolāri station. Its area is more than 2000 acres and the population was about 450 in 1901. The ruins of a large number of temples are found here, extending over a space of about a mile long by a quarter of a mile broad on the banks of the little Lanetī stream. The ruins are mere mounds of cut and broken stone, not a single one of which now stands upon the other. Only two of the temples appear to have been of large size. One fine statue of a Jain Tīrthankar still remains on the spot and is worshipped by the Hindus as Nāgā Bābā. Some of the carvings from Ghansor have been placed on the Dalsāgar tank at Seonī, and some Jain statues have been placed in the modern Jain temples there. The sculptures show that the temples belonged to the period of about the 9th century A.D. The proprietor of the village is a Muhammadan.

Kanhiwara.—A large village in the Seonī tahsīl, 17 miles north-east of Seonī on the Mandlā road, and a station on the railway line from Seonī to Neinpur. Its area is 2500 acres and the population in 1901 was nearly 1400 persons as against under 1100 in 1891. The village has an old fort. The weekly market held on Thursdays has become of some importance since the construction of the railway, and a considerable quantity of grain is brought for sale here. A market-place has been constructed. There are a number of Kumhārs in the village who make good earthen pots, bottles and pipe-bowls, and vessels of brass and bell-metal are sold by Audhia Sonārs. The

village has a primary school, police outpost and post office and an inspection hut has been erected. The proprietors are Muhammadans.

Keolari.—A village in the Seonī tahsīl, 33 miles north-east of Seonī on the Mandlā road, and a railway station on the line to Neinpur. The village is situated in a plain near the junction of the Waingangā and Sāgar rivers, and is occasionally liable to be submerged when they are in flood. The railway here crosses the Waingangā. The area of the village is nearly 1700 acres and the population was 1300 persons both in 1891 and 1901. A weekly market is held on Fridays at which a good deal of betel-leaf from Jubbulpore and Mandlā is sold, and since the construction of the railway, a trade has sprung up in grain, hemp and cotton. A road has recently been made from Keolāri to Uglī. The village was brought under the Mukaddam Rules in 1903 and a sum of about Rs. 200 is raised annually from the residents and expended on sanitation. A railway dispensary, a primary school, a police Station-house and a post office have been established, and a District branch dispensary is to be opened. The proprietor is a Baniā who has some other villages.

Khawasa.—A small village, 30 miles south of Seonī, on the Nāgpur road near the southern border of the District, with a population of about 500 persons. A number of Chamārs reside here and there is a considerable tanning industry. Vessels of brass and bell-metal are also sold. A dāk bungalow is maintained here, and there is an encamping ground. A large tank in the village was improved in the famine of 1900. Khawāsa has a primary school, a post office and a forest post. The proprietor is a Muhammadan.

Kothighat Fair.—See Chirchira.

Lakhnadon Tahsil.—The northern tahsīl of the Seonī District, lying between 22° 18′ and 22° 57′ N. and 79° 19′ and 80° 17′ E. The tahsīl is bounded on the north by the Jubbulpore District, on the east by the Mandlā District, on the south by the

Natural features.

Seonī tahsil, and on the west by the Chhindwāra and Narsinghpur Districts. A chain of hills known as the Selwā Ghāt and forming part of the Sātpurā range separates the Lakhnādon tahsīl from Jubpulpore and Narsinghpur, and the Nerbudda borders it to the north and north-east. To the west a range of hills divides Lakhnādon from the Chhindwāra District. The area of the tahsīl is 1558 square miles or 49 per cent of that of the District. On the north-east a small block of 44 villages lies below the hills in the valley of the Nerbudda. The soil here is fairly good and some of the fields are embanked for growing both wheat and rice. The large tract from Lakhnādon west and north to the border is hilly, thickly forested and of poor fertility, the small millets and oilseeds being the principal crops grown. To the south-west of Lakhnādon round Dongaria and Chhapāra, lies a fairly fertile tract containing the best land in the tahsīl, though it is much cut up by forest. And east of Chhapāra up to the Mandlā border, the country is fairly open, though the surface is undulating and the soil not very productive. The greater part of the tahsīl is hilly and uneven, and is marked by a succession of barren stony uplands divided by narrow valleys in which pockets of deep black soil are found. But the position of these lands, especially where the hills are particularly steep, is not very favourable, and water-logging is a defect to which they are not infrequently liable. Outside the villages lying along the Nerbudda there is no rice land in the tahsīl. The Nerbudda, the Waingangā and the Sher are the principal rivers.

Population.

The population of the tahsīl in 1901 was 135,345 persons or 41 per cent of that of the District. In 1891 the population was 151,483 and in 1881, 139,980. The increase between 1881 and 1891 was about 8 and the decrease in the last decade nearly 11 per cent of the population. The density of population is 87 persons per square mile as against 117 in the Seonī tahsīl. The tahsīl contains 947 villages as given in the

Village Lists, of which 191 are uninhabited. There is no town and only two villages Chhapāra (3884), and Lakhnādon (2148) contained over 2000 persons in 1901, while Adegaon Dhūma, Kudarī and Sunwāra had a population of 1000 or more. The cultivators are many of them Gonds, and their staple food consists of the hill millets, kodon and kutkī, grown on the stony and sloping land.

Agriculture.

Of the total area, 367 square miles or 24 per cent are included in the Government forests, while another 167 square miles consist of private tree-forest and 198 of scrub jungle and grass. Of the village area of 1288 square miles, a proportion of 61 per cent or rather more than half was occupied for cultivation in 1904-05 as against 58 per cent at last settlement and 39 per cent at the 30 years' settlement. The cultivated area in 1904-05 was 434,000 acres and has increased by 11 per cent since the last settlement (1895-97). The statistics of cropping at settlement and during the years 1900-05 are shown below:—

Year.	Wheat.	Rice.	Gram.	Kodon kutki.	Juār.	Jagni.	Til.	Linseed.	Cotton.	Sugarcane.	Total cropped area (includes double cropped area).
At last settlement	54,431	16,281	18,371	85,294	15,400	37,059		3,996	4,045	250	279,026
1900-01 ...	58,961	15,351	11,343	78,879	18,967	10,836	25,960	1,944	8,141	94	293,703
1901-02 ...	94,011	31,273	18,853	84,689	10,546	11,714	23,426	2,624	5,505	107	364,876
1902-03 ...	94,931	15,932	27,876	84,973	13,098	13,246	25,084	2,330	5,471	122	337,582
1903-04 ...	93,705	13,984	24,191	72,991	10,854	16,193	26,518	3,235	7,079	99	340,732
1904-05 ...	110,045	14,557	26,251	87,517	5,375	15,407	23,072	3,472	8,963	88	356,684
Percentage of area under each crop on the total area under crop as shown in the last column 1904-05.	31	4	7	25	2	4	7	1	1	...	

The settlement statistics apparently do not include the ryotwāri villages, and do not therefore afford a proper basis of comparison with subsequent years. The cropping fell off largely during the famines, but the position occupied in the

normal seasons up to 1893 has been more than recovered. The cropping of the tahsīl is less valuable than that of Seonī. It grows a smaller proportion of wheat and gram and a larger one of oilseeds and the small millets. The acreage of cotton has advanced in recent years, but that of sugarcane has fallen off.

Land Revenue.

The demand for land revenue at the 30 years' settlement was Rs. 66,000 and fell at 48 per cent of the assets. It was raised at the recent settlement to Rs. 1·01 lakhs giving an increase of Rs. 35,000 or 52 per cent on the revenue immediately prior to revision, and falling at 42 per cent of the assets which amounted to Rs. 2·40 lakhs, the cash rental being Rs. 1·68 lakhs. In 1904-05 the land revenue was Rs. 1·12 lakhs, some increase having been obtained from ryotwāri villages. The removal of the patwāri cess and the additional rates has reduced the cesses from Rs. 14,000 to Rs 6000. At last settlement the following eleven groups were formed for assessment purposes, the number of villages contained by each being shown in brackets against it:—Nerbudda (45), Kedārpur (65), Ghansor (138), Dhūma (96), Lakhnādon (60), Pātan (54), Sāgar (54), Chhapāra (50), Dongaria (71), Sunwāra (61), Northern Gangā (72). The average rent-rate for the tahsīl at settlement was R. 0-8-4 as against R. 0-13-2 in the Seonī tahsīl, while the revenue incidence per cultivated acre was R. 0-4-2. The highest rent-rate was R. 0-12-3 in the Chhapāra group; the Dongaria, Nerbudda, Sunwāra and Lakhnādon groups had a rent-rate of more than 8 annas and in the remaining groups the rate was less than 8 annas an acre.

Miscellaneous.

The tahsil is divided into four Revenue Inspectors' circles with headquarters at Chhapāra, Sunwāra, Ghansor and Dhūma and 75 patwāris' circles. It has three police Station-houses at Lakhnādon, Ghansor and Chhapāra and five outposts.

Lakhnadon Village.—A village 38 miles north of

Seonī on the Jubbulpore road, and the headquarters of the Lakhnādon tahsīl. Its area is over 700 acres and the population was about 2150 in 1901, having increased by more than 100 persons during the decade. Lakhnādon appears from its numerous ruins of temples and buildings to have been a place of some importance in ancient times. The remains of Hindu and Jain temples exist, and some fragments of sculptures and images have been collected at the shrine of Khermāta, the tutelary goddess of the village. Others have been deposited in the Nāgpur Museum. Much of the stone work has been used in the construction of bridges on the Nāgpur-Jubbulpore road, and broken stones and images can be dug up *in situ.* At a distance of a mile from the village is a hillock called Son Tauria, on which a small *garhī* or fortress apparently stood. A short inscription on a stone broken in two was found here. It mentions the name of one Vikram Sen and apparently speaks of the construction of a palace The invocation, however, appears to be to a Jain god. Two temples standing near the stream outside the village have been lately erected from the ruins of the old ones. These are of the mediæval Brāhmanic style and appear to date from the 9th or 10th century like those of Ghansor. The local tradition is to the effect that Lakhnādon was founded by one Lakhan Kunwar; a stone standing on the bank of a small tank known as the Rānī Tāl is considered to be a representation of him and is still worshipped. Lakhan Kunwar is locally supposed to have been a relation of the Pāndavas and to have been their vice-regent at Lakhnādon while they were ruling at Barehtā near Narsinghpur. The perforated onyx stones called Sulaimān's beads may be picked up here. Lakhnādon was formerly the capital of an estate of 84 villages or a Chaurāsi, the number 84 being often found not only as a measure of landed estates, but in Hindu mythology and literature. The village was formerly under the provisions of the Village Sanitation Act, but this arrangement was discontinued in 1903 and the Mukaddam Rules introduced

in lieu of it. A market is held on Mondays and Fridays in the central street. The village contains the tahsīl buildings, a dispensary, a telegraph office and a *sarai*. It has a first grade vernacular middle school with 133 pupils enrolled in 1905, and a Government girls' school. The proprietors are a well-known family of Lodhīs.

Largi.—A small village in the Lakhnādon tahsīl, about 20 miles south-west of Lakhnādon, and situated at the junction of the Thel and Waingangā rivers. At this spot, which is known as Songarh, there is an old fort and some carved stones. Tradition has it that a shower of gold once fell here, and that some of the gold is still concealed in the fort.

Mundara.—A sacred place, being the source of the Waingangā river, situated in the Seonī tahsīl about ten miles to the south-east of Seonī in the village of Rajolā near Partābpur. The river rises in a pool of water, about which the following story is told. Long ago a Gond lived here who had an only daughter named Gangā, and she was betrothed to a boy called Benī, who was serving for her in her father's house. He had been set to dig a well and one day while he was digging, a spring of water suddenly gushed out and washed him away. No one knew what had become of him and in the evening Gangā went out to search for him and called his name many times but got no answer. At last a pair of hands rose above the surface of the stream, which had gone on flowing, and Gangā knowing that they were those of her lover ascended a high rock close by and flung herself into the stream. The hands closed over her and disappeared, but the stream has gone on flowing ever since and is the Waingangā river. Several temples have been erected near the place and an annual fair is held in the month of Kārtik (October-November) lasting for fifteen days. About ten thousand persons attend the fair and some hundreds of temporary shops are opened for the sale of goods. The primary object of those who come is to bathe in the Waingangā, but a considerable trade is also done in hardware and leather goods.

Nerbudda River (*Narbadā; Narmadā—The Namados* of Ptolemy; *Namnadios* of the Periplus).—One of the most important rivers in India. It rises on the summit of the plateau of Amarkantak (22°40′ N. and 81°46′ E.), at the north-eastern apex of the Sātpurā range in Rewah (Central India), and enters the sea below Broach in the Bombay Presidency, after a total course of 801 miles.

Course of the river.

The river rises in a small tank, 3500 feet above the sea, surrounded by a group of temples, and guarded by an isolated colony of priests, and falls over a basaltic cliff in a descent of 80 feet. After a course of about 40 miles through the State of Rewah it enters the Central Provinces and winds circuitously through the rugged hills of Mandlā, pursuing a westerly course until it flows under the walls of the ruined palace of Rāmnagar. From Rāmnagar to Mandlā town it forms, for some 15 miles, a deep reach of blue water, unbroken by rocks, and clothed on either bank by forest. The river then turns north in a narrow loop towards Jubbulpore, close to which town, after a fall of some 30 feet, called the *dhuān-dhāra* or "fall of mist," it flows for two miles in a narrow channel which it has carved out for itself through rocks of marble and basalt, its width being here only some 20 yards. Emerging from this channel, which is well known as the 'Marble Rocks,' and flowing west, it enters the fertile basin of alluvial land forming the Nerbudda valley, situated between the Vindhyan and Sātpurā hills, and extending for 200 miles from Jubbulpore to Handia with a width of about 20 miles to the south of the river. The Vindhyan hills rise almost sheer from the northern bank along most of the valley, the bed of the river at this part of its course being the boundary between the Central Provinces and Central India (principally the Bhopāl and Indore States). Here the Nerbudda passes Hoshangābād and the old Muhammadan towns of Handia and Nimāwar.

---

[1] The article on the Nerbudda river is a reprint from the draft article for the Imperial Gazetteer.

The banks of the river in this valley are about 40 feet high, and the fall in its course between Jubbulpore and Hoshangābād is 340 feet. Below Handia the hills again approach the river on both sides and are clothed with dense forests, the favourite haunts of the Pindāris and less famous robbers. At Mandhār, 25 miles below Handia, there is a fall of 40 feet, and another of the same height at Punāsa. The bed of the river in its whole length within the Central Provinces is one sheet of basalt seldom exceeding 150 yards in absolute width, and, at intervals of every few miles, upheaved into ridges which cross it diagonally and behind which deep pools are formed. Emerging from the hills beyond Māndhāta on the borders of the Central Provinces, the Nerbudda now enters a second open alluvial basin, flowing through Central India (principally Indore State) for nearly 100 miles. The hills are here well away from the river, the Sātpurās being 40 miles to the south and the Vindhyas about 16 miles to the north. In this part of its course, the river passes the town of Maheshwar, the old capital of the Holkar family, where its northern bank is studded with temples, palaces and bathing ghāts, many of them built by the famous Ahalyā Bai, whose mausoleum is there. The last 170 miles of the river's course are in the Bombay Presidency, where it first separates the States of Barodā and Rājpipla and then meanders through the fertile District of Broach. Below Broach City it gradually widens into an estuary whose shores are 17 miles apart as it joins the gulf of Cambay.

Drainage area, tributaries, etc.

The drainage area of the Nerbudda, estimated at about 36,000 square miles, is principally to the south, and comprises the northern portion of the Sātpurā plateau and the valley Districts. The principal tributaries are the Banjar in Mandlā, the Sher and Shakkar in Narsinghpur, and the Tawā, Ganjāl and Chhotā Tawā in Hoshangābād District. The only important tributary to the north is the Hiran, which flows in beneath the Vindhyan hills, in Jubbulpore District. Most of these rivers

have a short and precipitous course from the hills, and fill with extraordinary rapidity in the rains, producing similarly rapid floods in the Nerbudda itself. Owing to this and to its rocky course, the Nerbudda is useless for navigation except by country boats between August and February, save in the last part of its course where it is navigable by vessels of 70 tons burden up to the city of Broach, 30 miles from its mouth. It is crossed by railway bridges below Jubbulpore, at Hoshangābād, and at Mortakkā. The influence of the tides reaches to a point 55 miles from the sea, and coupled with the height of the river's banks throughout the greater part of its course, makes it useless for irrigation.

Sacred character of the river.

The Nerbudda, which is referred to as the Rewah (probably from the Sanskrit root *rev*, to hop, owing to the leaping of the stream down its rocky bed) in the Mahabhārata and Rāmāyana, is said to have sprung from the body of Siva and is one of the most sacred rivers of India, local devotees placing it above the Ganges, on the ground that whereas it is necessary to bathe in the Ganges for forgiveness of sins, this object is attained by mere contemplation of the Nerbudda. 'As wood is cut by a saw (says a Hindu proverb), so at the sight of the holy Nerbudda, do a man's sins fall away.' Gangā herself, so local legend avers, must dip in the Nerbudda once a year. She comes in the form of a coal-black cow, but returns home quite white free from all sin. The Ganges, moreover, was (according to the Revā Purāna) to have lost its purifying virtues in the year 1895, though this fact has not yet impaired its reputation for sanctity. At numerous places on the course of the Nerbudda and especially at spots where it is joined by another river, are groups of temples, tended by Nāramdeo Brāhmans, the special priests of the river, where annual gatherings of pilgrims take place. The most celebrated of these are Bherāghāt, Barmhān, and Onkār Māndhāta in the Central Provinces, and Barwāni in Central India where the Nerbudda is joined by the Kapilā. All of these are connected by legends with

saints and heroes of Hindu mythology, and the description of the whole course of the Nerbudda, and of all these places and their history, is contained in a sacred poem of 14,000 verses (the Narmadā Khanda) which, however, has been adjudged to be of somewhat recent origin. Every year 300 or more pilgrims start to perform the *pradakshnā* of the Nerbudda, that is, to walk from its mouth at Broach to its source at Amarkantak on one side, and back on the other, a performance of the highest religious efficacy. The most sacred spots on the lower course of the river are Sukaltīrth, where stands an old banyan tree that bears the name of the saint Kabīr and the site of Rājā Balī's horse sacrifice near Broach.

Historical associations.

The Nerbudda is commonly considered to form the boundary between Hindustān and the Deccan, the reckoning of the Hindu year differing on either side of it. The Marāthās spoke of it as 'The River' and considered that when they crossed it they entered a foreign country. In the Mutiny the Nerbudda practically marked the limit of the insurrection. North of it the British temporarily lost control of the country, while to the south, in spite of isolated disturbances, their authority was maintained. Hence, when, in 1858, Tantiā Topi executed his daring raid across the river, the utmost apprehension was excited, as it was feared that on the appearance of the representative of the Peshwā, the recently annexed Nāgpur territories would rise in revolt. These fears, however, proved to be unfounded and the country remained tranquil.

Pench River.—A river which rises in the Motur plateau of the Chhindwāra District and flows east and south-east through Chhindwāra, forming for a short distance the boundary between this District and Seonī. It subsequently joins the Kanhān in the Nāgpur District, its total length being about 190 miles. The name is said to be derived from *pench* a screw, on account of its zig-zag course.

Piparwani.—A large village in the Seonī tahsīl, about 34 miles south of Seonī. Its area is nearly 2000 acres and the population in 1901 was about 1000 persons as against nearly 1700 in 1891. Some time ago a considerable amount of iron work was done at Pīparwāni, with the iron found locally, pans for boiling sugarcane and implements of agriculture being made. These had a local reputation and were preferred in the District to any others. The use of indigenous iron has now however been discontinued and the imported metal only is used. A weekly market is held on Mondays, but this has also largely declined in importance. The village has a primary school and post office. It formerly belonged to an Agarwāla Baniā, but the bulk of it is now held by a Mehrā proprietor.

Sarekha.—A small village in the Seonī tahsīl, about 21 miles north of Seonī and at the junction of the Wainganā and Hirrī rivers. At the confluence of the rivers are some large circles of stones like those at Stonehenge; the stones are placed standing in groups of four or five with a massive flat one lying table-wise above them and are arranged in circles of 40 or 50 feet in diameter. They have been held to be of Indo-Scythic origin. Sterndale[1] gives the following legend about them as emanating from an old Baigā village priest:—
'In times long ago, before we Gonds came into existence 'and the country was peopled by *deotās* (*i.e.*, gods), the 'Hirrī river was born, and was to be married to the 'Waingangā. Ah! in those days the Waingangā was a finer 'river than it is now; Bhīmsen spoilt it, he did. There 'were Dongar Deo and Sundar Deo, and Kukrā Deo, and 'ever so many *deotās*, but Bhīmsen was the most power'ful of all, as Kukrā Deo was the most crabbed and ill-'favoured. In those days Bhīmsen wanted to dam up the 'Waingangā to make a fish pond, so he began at night, for 'the *deos* only work at night, and he began to tear up the 'hills by the roots and to throw them down into the valley.

[1] Seonī or Camp Life on the Sātpurā Range, p. 97.

'That big spur near the bend of the river is one, and the 'big hog-backed hill, where the Gurerā Deo still lives, is 'another. A little gap only remained, the space between 'the hills where the river still runs, and Bhīmsen toiled 'hard, for if he could not do it before morning he would 'never be able to do it at all. So he tore up two hills 'by the roots and, tying them to the ends of his staff, 'slung them across his shoulder and carried them down 'to the river; but just before he got there the cock crew. 'Bhīmsen flung down his load in a rage, and there 'are the hills to this day; there, those conical ones out 'in the plain. It is true, Mahārāj, continued he, gravely, 'seeing a smile on our faces, what should hills do out there 'by themselves if Bhīmsen had not thrown them down 'there? And he hurled away his staff across the river; 'they say it is still to be seen some thirty miles from here; 'it is of stone, and is forty paces long. Well, sāhib, as 'Bhīmsen could not stop the Waingangā, the Waingangā 'went on, and at last wanted a wife, and the *deotās* agreed 'it was only just and fair he should have a wife as other 'rivers mostly have. So the young Hirrī was born, and 'there was to be a grand wedding. All the *deotās* and wood-'land fays were to attend—all except Kukrā Deo, for he 'was, as I have said, crabbed and ill-favoured, and made 'everybody miserable; so they all agreed they would not 'invite Kukrā Deo. Alas! They forgot that he was one of 'the most powerful as well as the most malicious of the '*deotās*. It was a sad mistake, and Kukrā Deo laughed a 'savage laugh when he heard of it, and vowed to be re-'venged. So all the *deotās* and woodland fays attended the 'marriage of the pretty Hirrī with the wild and capricious 'Waingangā; all the *deos*, and from yonder pointed hill, yon 'far away, came Rājā Bobal Sāh on his winged horses—yes, 'sāhib, horses had wings in those days; Rājā Indra cut them 'off, but they carry the marks to this day. Look at your 'horse's legs, sāhib, and you will see the marks. Well,

'Mahārāj, the party assembled at the *sangam* (confluence) of 'the two streams, and the feast began. The elder and more 'sober *deotās* sat in groups of four or five, talking and 'watching the younger ones, who were dancing round hand 'in hand in rings. All were bright and gay, and all said, '"Well it is that crabbed old Kukrā Deo is not here to spoil 'our pleasure." But old Kukrā Deo laughed to himself from 'behind the rock from whence he watched the dancers; he 'laughed with savage glee as he hugged something under 'his arm. The mirth grew fast and furious, and the revel 'was at its height, when Kukrā Deo, chuckling to himself and 'filling his ears with clay, pulled out the bundle from under 'his arm—it was a cock fast asleep. Placing it on the rock 'before him he gave it a shake, and, snatching a handful of 'feathers from its tail, he plunged with a triumphant yell into 'the Waingangā. The startled bird awoke with a scream, 'looked round half sleepily for a second, and then clapped 'his wings and crew, loud and clear. That instant sudden 'silence fell on the place; the dancers, the groups of watch-'ers, all turned into stone! rude blocks occupied the place of 'nymph and fay, and hushed was the sound of revelry. 'Weeping, the silver Hirrī fell into the arms of the Wain-'gangā, who bore her sobbing away. There are no more '*deotās* or woodland fays left in the silent valley since the 'night when the wicked Kukrā Deo turned them all into stones.'

Satpura Hills.[1]—A range of hills in the centre of India. The name, which is modern, originally belonged only to the hills which divide the Nerbudda and Tāpti valleys in Nimār (Central Provinces), and which were styled the *sāt putra* or seven sons of the Vindhyan mountains. Another derivation is from *sāt purā* (seven folds), referring to the numerous parallel ridges of the range. The term Sātpurās is now, however, customarily applied to the whole range, which,

Geographical position.

[1] The article on the Sātpurā Hills is a reprint from the draft article for the Imperial Gazetteer.

commencing at Amarkantak in Rewah, Central India (22° 40' N., 81° 46' E.), runs south of the Nerbudda river nearly down to the western coast. The Sātpurās are sometimes, but incorrectly, included under the Vindhya range. Taking Amarkantak as the eastern boundary the Sātpurās extend from east to west for about 600 miles, and in their greatest depth, exceed 100 miles from north to south. The shape of the range is almost triangular. From Amarkantak an outer ridge runs south-west for about 100 miles to the Sāletekrī hills in the Bālāghāt District thus forming, as it were, the head of the range, which shrinking as it proceeds westward from a broad tableland to two parallel ridges ends, so far as the Central Provinces are concerned, at the famous hill fortress of Asīrgarh. Beyond this point the Rājpīpla hills, which separate the valley of the Nerbudda from that of the Tāpti, complete the chain as far as the Western Ghāts. On the tableland comprised between the northern and southern faces of the range are situated the Districts of Mandlā, part of Bālāghāt, Seonī, Chhindwāra and Betūl.

Geological formation.

The superficial stratum covering the main Sātpurā range is trappean, but in parts of all the Central Provinces Districts which it traverses crystalline rocks are uppermost, and over the Pachmarhī hills the sandstone is also uncovered. In Mandlā the higher peaks are capped with laterite. On the north and south the approaches to the Sātpurās are marked as far west as Turanmāl by low lines of foot-hills. These are succeeded by the steep slopes leading up to the summit of the plateau, traversed in all directions by narrow deep ravines hollowed out by the action of the streams and rivers, and covered throughout their extent with forest.

Features of the plateau.

Portions of the Sātpurā plateau consist, as in the Mandlā and the north of the Chhindwāra District, of a rugged mass of hills hurled together by volcanic action. But the greater part is an undulating tableland, a succession of bare stony

ridges, and narrow fertile valleys, into which the soil has been deposited by drainage. In a few level tracts as in the valleys of the Māchna and Sāmpna near Betūl, and the open plain between Seonī and Chhindwāra, there are extensive areas of productive land. Scattered over the plateau isolated flat-topped hills rise abruptly from the plain. The scenery of the northern and southern hills as observed from the roads which traverse them, is of remarkable beauty. The drainage of the Sātpurās is carried off on the north by the Nerbudda river and to the south by the Wainganga, Wardhā and Tāpti, all of which have their source in these hills.

Heights.

The highest peaks are contained in the northern range rising abruptly from the valley of the Nerbudda and generally sloping down to the plateau, but towards the west the southern range has the greater elevation. Another noticeable feature is a number of small tablelands lying among the hills at a greater height than the bulk of the plateau. Of these Pachmarhī (3530 feet) and Chikaldā in Berār (3664 feet) have been formed into hill stations, while Raigarh (2200 feet) in the Bālāghāt District and Khāmla in Betūl (3700 feet) are famous grazing and breeding grounds for cattle. Dhūpgarh (4454 feet) is the highest point on the range, and there are a few others of over 4000. Among the peaks that rise from 3000 to 3800 feet above sea-level, the grandest is Turanmāl (Bombay Presidency), a long, rather narrow, tableland 3300 feet above the sea and about 16 square miles in area. West of this the mountainous land presents a wall-like appearance both towards the Nerbudda on the north and the Tāpti on the south. On the eastern side the Tāsdīn Valī (Central India) commands a magnificent view of the surrounding country. The general height of the plateau is about 2000 feet.

Forests.

The hills and slopes are covered by forest extending over some thousands of square miles, but much of this is of little value owing to unrestricted fellings prior to the adoption of a system of

conservancy, and to the shifting cultivation practised by the aboriginal tribes, which led to patches being annually cleared and burnt down. The most valuable forests are those of the *sāl* tree (*Shorea robusta*) on the eastern hills, and the teak on the west.

Hill tribes and communications.

The Sātpurā hills have formed in the past a refuge for the aboriginal or Dravidian tribes, driven out of the plains by the advance of Hindu civilisation. Here they retired and occupied the stony and barren slopes which the new settlers, with the rich lowlands at their disposal, disdained to cultivate, and here they still rear their light rain crops of millets which are scarcely more than grass, barely tickling the soil with the plough and eking out a scanty subsistence with the roots and fruits of the forests, and the pursuit of game. The Baigās, the wildest of these tribes, have even now scarcely attained to the rudiments of cultivation, but the Gonds, the Korkūs and the Bhils have made some progress by contact with their Hindu neighbours. The open plateau has for two or three centuries been peopled by Hindu immigrants, but it is only in the last fifty years that travelling has been rendered safe and easy by the construction of metalled roads winding up the steep passes, and enabling wheeled traffic to pass over the heavy land of the valleys. Till then such trade as there was, was conducted by nomad Banjārās on pack-bullocks. The first railway across the Sātpurā plateau, a narrow-gauge extension of the Bengal-Nāgpur line from Gondia to Jubbulpore, was opened in 1905. The Great Indian Peninsula Railway, from Bombay to Jubbulpore, runs through a breach in the range just east of Asīrgarh, while the Bombay-Agra branch road crosses further to the west.

Natural features.

Seoni Tahsil.—The southern tahsīl of the District, situated between 21° 36′ and 22° 24′ N. and 79° 19′ and 80° 6′ E. It is bounded on the north and north-east by the Lakhnādon

tahsīl, on the east by the Bālāghāt District, from which it is divided by the Wainganga for a short distance, on the south-east by Bhandāra, on the south by Nāgpur, and on the west by the Chhindwāra District from which it is divided by the Pench river. The area of the tahsīl is 1648 square miles or 51 per cent of that of the District. West of Seonī town and lying north and south of the Chhindwāra road which passes nearly through its centre, lies the Seonī Havelī, a fertile and level tract of black soil which is principally devoted to wheat. The Havelī settlement group, comprising this tract, covered an area of about 120 square miles and contained about 70 villages. North and south of the Havelī and extending west from Seonī to the Chhindwāra border lie the groups known as the northern and southern *kathār* and consisting of undulating country broken by patches of forest, but covered with black soil of varying fertility and principally growing spring crops. This area extends over about 300 square miles. To the west of Seonī lies a tract of similar nature, but more undulating and with a larger proportion of forest, in which both spring and autumn crops are grown. To the north-east round Ghansor lies another fairly level and open plain in which wheat is largely grown, covering about 150 square miles. On the east and south-east of the tahsīl the Uglī and Barghāt groups contain land of different character; the soil is formed from crystalline rock and is of the sandy nature suited for rice. Tanks are numerous and transplanted rice is grown by the Ponwārs whose skill at this kind of cultivation is well known. The tract is really part of the Waingangā rice country comprised in the Bhandāra, Chānda and Balāghāt Districts. Lastly, below the Sātpurā plateau lies the Kurai tract, hilly and much interspersed with forest and also mainly devoted to rice cultivation. The Waingangā and its tributaries, the Sāgar and the Hirrī, drain the greater part of the tahsīl and the Bāwanthari flows down from the southern hills to join the Waingangā.

Population.

The population of the tahsil in 1901 was 192,364 persons or 59 per cent of that of the District. In 1891 the population was 219,284 and in 1881, 196,017. The increase between 1881 and 1891 was 11·9 per cent as against the District figure of 10·4, and the decrease between 1891 and 1901 was 12·3 per cent as against 11·6 for the District as a whole. The density of population is 117 persons per square mile as against 87 in the Lakhnādon tahsīl. The tahsīl contains one town Seonī and 804 villages, of which 133 are uninhabited according to the Village Lists. There is no village with a population of 2000. The following eight villages contained 1000 or more persons in 1901 :—Arī, Barghāt, Chūhi, Dondīwāra, Kanhiwāra, Keolāri, Piparia Kalān and Pīparwāni.

Agriculture.

About half the cultivated area consists of the friable dark-brown coloured soil known as *morand*, which is suited to the growth of spring crops, while 17 per cent is the *sehrā* or sandy soil on which rice is generally raised. The remaining area consists of inferior shallow and stony land. Of the whole area of the tahsīl 458 square miles or 28 per cent are included in Government forest, while another 247 square miles consist of private tree-forest and 154 of scrub jungle and grass. Of the village area of 1245 square miles, a proportion of about 60 per cent was occupied for cultivation in 1904-05, showing a very slight increase since the last settlement, while at the 30 years' settlement only 40 per cent of the village area was occupied. In the Havelī group the occupied area is 79 per cent. of the total available. The cultivated area in 1904-05 was 458,000 acres. The statistics of cropping at settlement and during the years 1900-05 are shown on the next page. The net cropped area fell from 376,000 acres at settlement to 338,000 acres in 1900-01, but had increased in 1904-05 to 383,000 acres. The area under wheat has somewhat increased, but rice shows a decline from the settlement figure,

Year.	Wheat.	Rice.	Gram.	Kodon-kutkī.	Juār.	Jagni.	Til.	Linseed.	Cotton.	Sugarcane.	Total cropped area (includes double cropped area.
At last settlement,	131,588	88,475	17,946	39,305	12,755	18,581		27,921	1,166	830	398,
1900-01	115,786	50,967	18,251	53,053	33,363	11,618	10,483	6,051	3,130	341	349,
1901-02	115,203	51,577	12,369	50,647	25,358	13,575	9,288	4,853	2,869	496	334,
1902-03	114,126	42,673	22,411	49,587	28,373	13,585	8,546	4,201	2,379	376	357,
1903-04	139,637	58,729	23,226	52,048	28,246	15,211	6,841	8,462	3,911	321	397,
1904-05	151,629	63,304	22,235	48,042	23,918	14,582	5,870	5,197	6,016	375	393,
Percentage of area under each crop on the total area under crop as shown in the last column 1904-05.	39	16	6	12	6	4	1	1	$1\frac{1}{2}$	...	...

and has in part been supplanted by kodon. The cropping is on the whole considerably more valuable than that of the Lakhnādon tahsīl, having a larger proportion of wheat and rice and a smaller one of til and kodon.

Land Revenue.

The demand for land revenue at the 30 years' settlement was Rs. 96,000 and fell at 48 per cent of the assets. It was raised at the recent settlement to Rs. 1·92 lakhs, giving an increase of Rs. 95,000 or 97 per cent on the revenue prior to revision, and falling at 49 per cent of the assets which amounted to Rs. 3·91 lakhs. In 1904-05 the demand for land revenue was Rs. 1·73 lakhs. The cash rental amounted to Rs. 2·84 lakhs at last settlement as against Rs. 1·49 lakhs at the 30 years' settlement. The cesses were formerly Rs. 26,000, but have been reduced to Rs. 11,000 by the abolition of the patwāri cess and additional rates. At last settlement the following assessment groups were formed, the number of villages contained by each being shown in brackets against it—Kurai (65), Southern Kathār (78), Havelī (68), Seonī (80), Barghāt (121), Uglī (67), Ghansor (111), Northern Kathār (101). The average rent-rate per acre for the tahsīl was R. 0-13-2 as against the District figure of R. 0-10-10 and the

revenue-rate R. 0-7-2 as against R. 0-5-9 for the District as a whole. The rent-rate for the Havelī group was much the highest in the whole District amounting to R. 0-15-9. The Seonī, Ghansor and Barghāt groups had a rent-rate of 14 annas or more, and in the remaining groups it was under 14 annas.

Miscellaneous.

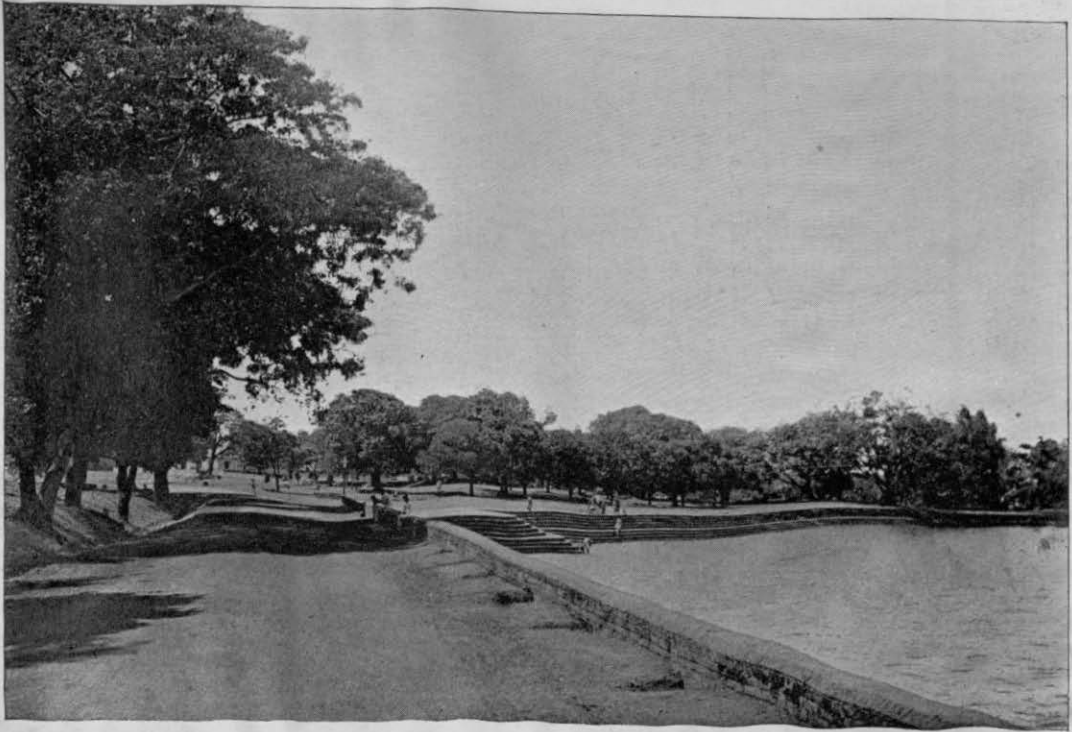
The tahsīl is divided into four Revenue Inspectors' circles with headquarters at Bandol, Kanhiwāra, Kurai and Barghāt and 81 patwāris' circles. It has four police Station-houses at Seonī, Kālbori, Barghāt and Keolāri, and 9 outposts.

Position and population.

Seoni Town (also known as *Seonī Chhapāra*):—The headquarters town of the tahsīl and District, situated in 22° 5′ N. and 79° 33′ E. on the Great Northern Road, 79 miles from Nāgpur and 86 from Jubbulpore. A branch line of the Sātpurā narrow-gauge railway runs from Neinpur junction through Seonī to Chhindwāra, and Seonī is by rail 203 miles from Nāgpur and 722 from Bombay. The population of the town at the last four enumerations has been as follows:—*1872*, 9557; *1881*, 10,203; *1891*, 11,976; *1901*, 11,864. In 1901 the population included 2989 Muhammadans, 393 Jains and 154 Christians.

Ancient buildings.

Seonī was founded in 1774 by the Pathān governor Muhammad Amīr Khān who removed his headquarters here from Chhapāra and built a fort after the pattern of the Nāgpur Rājā's palace. The Dīwān family still reside in the buildings inside the fort. The town contains no notable old buildings, and a large portion of it was destroyed by fire in 1839. A number of fine Jain temples, known as the Sukarwāri temples have been erected by the resident Parwār Baniās since the British annexation. In one of these is an ancient image said to have been brought from Chaonrī and containing an inscription with the date 1491 A. D. There are four *satī* pillars of comparatively recent date. Some little way out of the town



DALSAGAR TANK, SEONI.

Photo-Mechl Dept., Thomason College, Roorkee.

on the Jubbulpore road, is the tomb of a Muhammadan saint Muhammad Shāh Walī, who is said by his prayers to have preserved the life of the Dīwān of Seonī when he was in danger of being trodden on by an elephant. The tomb is worshipped by Muhammadans and three villages are held free of revenue for its support. A small temple on the Moti tank contains the tomb of a Kāyasth, who became a Gosain and is said to have immured himself in it while still alive. A local gathering of the people of the town takes place here on the Dasahra festival. Another Muhammadan known as Sunde Shāh[1], is supposed to have defended Seonī. His head was struck off his body a mile outside the town and his headless trunk continued fighting until it reentered Seonī. Two platforms have been erected at the place where his head was struck off and where he finally fell and are venerated by the people.

Modern buildings.

The bungalows of the European officers are situated to the north of the town and the railway station to the south. The principal buildings are the District court house, the new Mission high school building and the graceful church of flagstone. The Victoria Library which serves as a town hall was erected in 1885 by public subscription at a cost of Rs. 2000. The fine Dalsāgar tank adjoins the town to the north. It is so called because it is said to have been made by one Dalsā Gaolī to water his buffaloes. The tank was enlarged and the *ghāts* or flights of stone steps constructed by Captain Thomson when Deputy Commissioner of the District in 1866-67. The stone steps extend along the entire southern side, and some carvings brought from Ghansor have been placed on them. They are of mediæval Brahmanic style and some of them are graceful. The most important carvings are the image of Siva seated on a two-bodied bull with the stream of the Ganges flowing from him, a Narāyan lying on a couch with two women rubbing his feet, Krishna dancing on the snake

[1] Otherwise known as Lunde Khān. He was really only a Pathān adventurer. See Chapter II, History.

and the eight-headed Devī. A small ornamental island has been constructed in the tank. The Budhwāri tank closer to the town has also some flights of steps.

Municipal undertakings.

Seonī was created a municipality in 1867 and the average annual municipal receipts during the decade ending 1901 were Rs. 25,000. In 1903-04 they were Rs. 39,000 and in 1904-05 Rs. 28,000. Octroi is the principal head of receipt and the expenditure is mainly on conservancy and education. The committee consists of 16 members of whom 10 are elected and 6 nominated. The water-supply is obtained from the Babaria tank situated at a distance of 2½ miles from the town, from which water was until recently conveyed to its centre in an open channel, being thus rendered very liable to pollution. Pipes have now been laid down to carry the water, and the Dalsāgar tank is kept filled from the same source of supply. Seonī is the most important trading town of the Sātpurā plateau and the opening of the railway should add to its prosperity. The exports are principally grain, oilseeds and hemp. The traders and bankers are mainly Parwār Baniās, and there are also colonies of Brāhmans and Kāyasths. The Muhammadans are engaged in shop-keeping and cultivation and act as private servants and peons. There are a number of Sonārs who work in gold and silver, and a cotton hand-weaving industry also exists. The town has three market-places, known as the Bhaironganj, Budhwāri and Sukarwāri bazars.

Educational and medical institutions.

The educational institutions comprise a high school with 33 students enrolled in 1905 which is managed by the Scotch Church Mission with the assistance of a grant from Government; vernacular schools for girls and boys and an orphanage also managed by the Mission; a municipal English middle school with 62 pupils enrolled in 1906; a primary school for boys and a Government girls' school. The town has a main dispensary with accommodation for 13 indoor patients, a police hospital and a dispensary for women



MAHADEO'S TEMPLE IN SEONI WITH JAIN TEMPLE IN BACKGROUND.

managed by the Mission. A veterinary dispensary has also been established, and a suitable building has recently been erected for it.

Site of the town.

The town stands on 565 acres of *nazūl* or Government land, and comprises within its limits parts of the mālguzāri villages of Seonī, Manglīpet, Bhaironganj and Ziārat, and some land belonging to the Dīwān Muhammad Alī Khān. The proprietor of Seonī is a Kāyasth Government official, and Manglīpet belongs to Rai Bahādur Dādu Gulāb Singh, Bhaironganj to a Brāhman and Ziārat to a Muhammadan. The area of mālguzāri land is about 1100 acres excluding nearly 500 acres of the Dīwān's *sīr* land which is not built over.

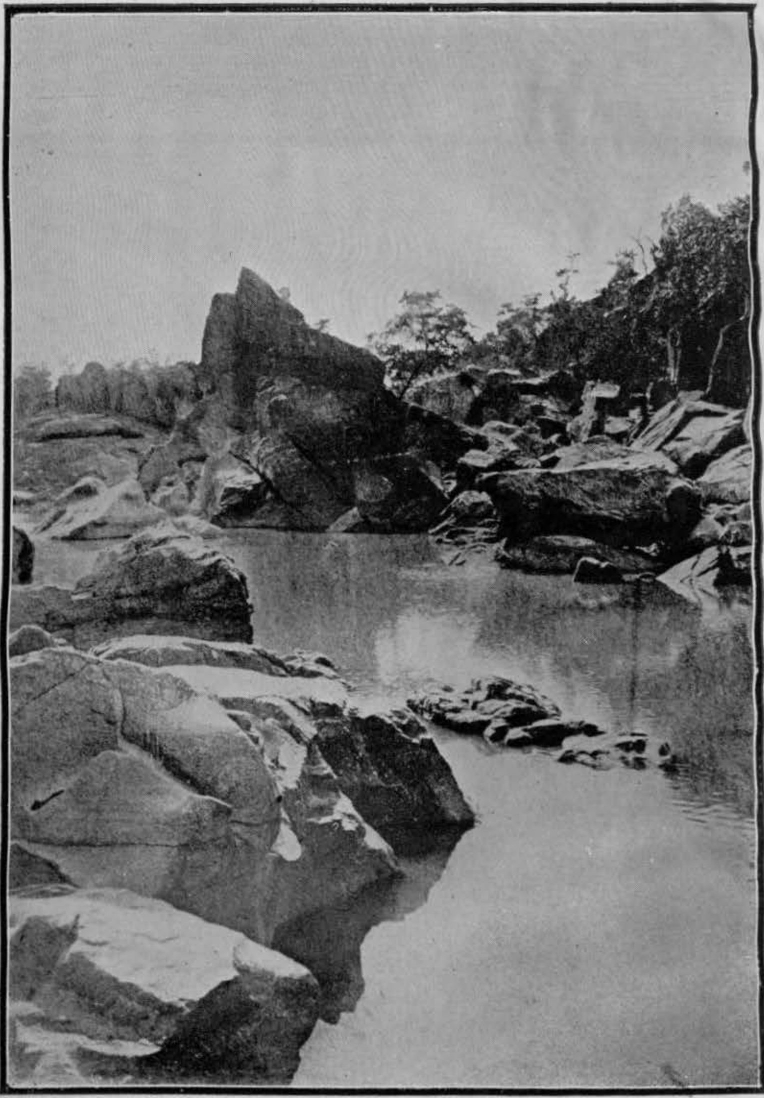
Sher River (The tiger).—A river which rises near Khamaria in the Lakhnādon tahsīl and after a course of about 80 miles through the Seonī and Narsinghpur Districts falls into the Nerbudda at Rati Karār near Barmhān. It is crossed by a fine stone bridge at Sonai Dongrī on the Nāgpur-Jubbulpore road in Seonī and by a railway bridge about 8 miles east of Narsinghpur. Its principal tributaries are the Māchārewā, Bārūrewā and Umar. Its bed is generally rocky and the current rapid, seaming its banks with ravines on either side. The length of the river is about 70 miles.

Thel River.—A river which rises in the Chhindwāra District and flows for a short distance through the south-west of the Lakhnādon tahsīl to join the Waingangā some miles above Chhapāra. Its length is about 50 miles.

Wainganga River[1]. (*Lt.* "The Arrow of Water").—A river in the Central Provinces, which rises near the village of Partābpur or Mundāra (21° 57′ N. and 79° 34′ E.), 11 miles from the town of Seonī on the Sātpurā plateau, and flows in a wide half circle, bending and winding among the spurs of the hills, from the west to the east of the Seonī

[1] The article on the Waingangā river is a reprint from the draft article for the Imperial Gazetteer.

District. Here it is diverted to the south, being joined by the Thānwar river from Mandlā, and forms the boundary of Seonī for some miles until it enters Bālāghāt. The upper valley, at first stony and confined, becomes later an alternation of rich, alluvial basins and narrow gorges, until at the eastern border of Seonī, the river commences its descent to the lower country, passing over a series of rapids and deep stony channels, overhung by walls of granite, 200 feet high. The course of the Waingangā during the last six miles before its junction with the Thānwar may perhaps be ranked next to the Bherāghāt gorge of the Nerbudda for beauty of river scenery in the Central Provinces. Emerging subsequently from the hills the river flows south and south-west through the rich rice lands of the Bālāghāt and Bhandāra Districts, passing the towns of Bālāghāt, Tumsar, Bhandāra and Paunī, and receiving the waters of numerous affluents. Of these the principal are the Bāgh in Bālāghāt, and the Kanhān, Chūlband, and Gārhvi in Bhandāra. It then flows through Chānda and after a course of 360 miles joins the Wardhā at Seonī on the south-western border of that District. The river formed by the confluence of the Wardhā and Waingangā is known as the Prānhita and is a tributary of the Godāvari. In the Seonī and Bālāghāt Districts the bed of the Waingangā is a series of basalt ridges with deep pools held up behind them, while in the hot weather the river shrinks to a narrow stream trickling between the indentations of the ridges. Below Bālāghāt its bed is generally broad and sandy, interspersed with occasional barriers of rock. Its width extends to about 600 yards in Chānda. During the flood season the river is navigable for light canoes from the confluence of the Bāgh as far as Garhchiroli in Chandā, though one or two barriers of rock impede traffic. Timber is floated down it and grain and vegetables are carried for short distances by boat. No use is made of the river for purposes of irrigation. The drainage area of the Waingangā includes the east of the Nāgpur plain and also the bulk of the Districts



THE WAINGANGA

Photo-Mechl. Dept., Thomason College, Roorkee.

of Seonī and Chhindwāra, whose waters are brought to it by the Pench and Kanhān rivers. It is crossed by the narrow gauge Sātpurā railway near Keolāri, by the main line of the Bengal-Nāgpur Railway near Nawāgaon in Bhandāra, and by a fine stone bridge at Chhapāra on the Seonī-Jubbulpore road. An annual fair is held at its source at Mundāra. The curiously winding and circuitous course of the Waingangā through the Seonī District is thus accounted for by a Hindu legend. Once upon a time there lived a certain Rājā in the Bhandāra District, who had a talisman ; and the effect of the talisman was that daily, when he put it in his mouth, he could be transported to Allahābād to bathe in the Ganges. But after he had done this daily for a long time, the Ganges said to him that it was a great labour for him to come every day to Allahābād to bathe in its waters ; and that if he filled a bottle with its water and laid it down by his house, a new stream would flow whose water would be that of the Ganges, and bathing in which would confer the same religious efficacy. So the Rājā thanked the river, and joyfully took a bottle of the water. But on his way home, while stopping to rest at Partābpur, the present source of the Waingangā, he inadvertently laid the bottle on the ground. Instantly a stream issued forth from it and began to flow. The dismayed Rājā then besought the river saying that this place was far from his home, and he would not be able to come there and bathe. So the river pitying him, changed its course and flowed north, east and south in a wide half circle until it passed through Bhandāra by the Rājā's house.

Pioneer Press, No. 445.—23-7-07.